



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

LOCAL GEMS

Father and Daughter Still Say 'Shave and a Haircut, 35 Bucks'

By Kate Volkman

When Mike Skoufos first arrived in Noe Valley 53 years ago, there was a barbershop on every block of 24th Street. Now there's only one—Of Barbers & Bears, at 4137 24th Street—and Skoufos and his daughter Stephanie Smith, who owns the shop, are among the few haircutters in the neighborhood still calling themselves barbers.

Skoufos, who is semi-retired, cuts hair just one day a week, but he used to spend eight hours a day, five days a week, wielding scissors and clippers. His long career as a barber in Noe Valley started out in 1953 at Martin's Barbershop on 24th near Vicksburg, in the spot now occupied by Tamasei Sushi.

"I was the youngest barber at the time," he recalls. "I was 24 years old, and all the young kids all of a sudden found out there was a young barber, so I started picking up all the young kids." It was a good thing, too, because Skoufos wasn't sure about Noe Valley as a potential market.

Dufty Wins New Term, Baby in Tow

By Laura McHale Holland

Happy. Relieved. Honored. Sleep-deprived. These are the words Bevan Dufty used to describe how he felt post-election Nov. 7. Garnering 64 percent of the vote, Dufty defeated challengers Alix Rosenthal and Starchild and kept his job as District 8 supervisor for four more years. In a spirited campaign, his opponents, as expected, tried to convince voters he didn't have what it takes to solve problems within the district and citywide.

But the real brouhaha came from the media's reaction to the birth of Dufty's daughter, Sidney Maely Goldfader-Dufty, in early October. As *Voice* readers know, Dufty, a gay man, has an unusual relationship with Sidney's mom, Rebecca Goldfader, a lesbian. Longtime friends, Dufty and Goldfader decided to move in together and create a family. Their daughter was conceived through in-vitro fertilization. Neither of the new parents has a romantic partner right now, but they expect, should this occur, they will embrace the new relationship.

In mid-campaign, KGO Radio talk-show host Pete Wilson criticized their arrangement, and implied that Dufty and Goldfader's style of co-parenting was not as good as that of two people who are in a committed sexual relationship, whether straight or gay. A firestorm ensued, but the attacks did nothing to dampen Dufty's enthusiasm for his new family.



This 1978 photo shows Mike Skoufos (far left) and Stephanie Smith trimming the locks of customers in one of Mike's old barbershops at 4006 24th Street. Today, father and daughter still carry on the family tradition up the street at Of Barbers & Bears.

Photo by Kit Hedman

"I came up here at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, looked around the neighborhood, and I thought, Oh, I don't know if I want to work here—it's very quiet," he recalls. "In those days, this was a working man's neighborhood."

But he stayed on to help Martin, who had just suffered a heart attack. After several years there, in the late 1950s Skoufos bought his own place at 24th and Diamond, naming it Mike's Barbershop.

At his new place, the younger set continued to keep him busy. Meanwhile, other barbershops started closing up. Skoufos explains that when long hair came into fashion, some of the local bar-

bers refused to cut it. "They said, 'Ah, that's for girls. Boys shouldn't grow long hair....' I went back to school and learned how to cut long hair. So we survived."

He bought out old-time barber Johnny Baumgartner at 24th and Noe, and set up Mike's Barbershop in a storefront that's now part of Pasta Pomodoro. His daughter Stephanie joined him at that location in 1977, when she was 21 years old.

Stephanie Smith hadn't intended to become a barber—she was an art major—but she laughingly remembers that her parents told her, "If you're going to be an

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Sleighbells Ring, Are You Listening? The Starlight Carolers will be singing on 24th Street again this year, as part of the second annual Noel Stroll on Saturday, Dec. 9. Rumor is Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there, too. For the lineup of festivities, see page 27.

Photo by Nick Morisco

"We were just at Dr. Schwanke's office [Sidney's pediatrician], and I saw a father with his daughter. We had just gotten Sidney's shots, and she was fussy, and I was trying to comfort her. The other dad looked over at me and said, 'Don't listen to any of those crazy radio guys. I'm really happy for you. Good for you.'" Dufty reports. "So I have these random acts of support from people in Noe Valley all the time that are just heartening and touching."

Dufty has been tending to his duties as supervisor during the day and feeding and changing Sidney throughout the night.

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A Walk for Pete's Sake

Families Raise Funds for Friend with Cancer

By Corrie M. Anders

The weather was near perfect for a Sunday-morning walk, sunny but not too warm, as the crowd of Pete Blanco's friends gathered on the green at Noe Courts. Spirits were high despite the serious purpose of the gathering.

The 24th Street park was the staging ground for a fundraiser to help the gravely-ill Blanco, a young father whose sudden diagnosis of stage-four brain cancer had stunned families throughout Noe Valley's close-knit preschool community.

Approximately 100 adults and 50 children—including Blanco, his wife Tia Mallette, and their two girls, Ramona, 5, and toddler Veronica—took part in the "Playground-to-Playground Walk: For Pete's Sake," from Noe Courts to Eureka Valley on Nov. 12. Many of the kids clutched strings tethered to helium-filled balloons, which floated over the parade.

Veronica, who wouldn't turn 2 until Christmas Eve, "grabbed her grandmother's hand and walked the entire distance," marveled Audrey Feely, one of the event organizers. "She had this look of determination. It was really sweet. She got into the spirit of it and decided she was going to walk the walk."

The walk ended at Eureka Valley Recreation Center on Collingwood Street, where the couple thanked everyone for their support. Martha & Bros. Coffee, Noah's Bagels, Bell Market, and Peasant Pies donated refreshments, and BNB Partners, a Duncan Street construction

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Wine Lovers Have A Spirited Winter

By Erin O'Brian

In a neighborhood with two thriving wine shops, numerous bars, and restaurants boasting impressive wine lists, the population obviously includes a lot of enthusiastic imbibers. Now, a group of Noe Valleyans has formed an organization to celebrate the tradition. For about a year, the members of the Noe Valley Drinking Club have met monthly to try the libations of bars in and around the neighborhood.

"It's mostly a social club," explains event coordinator Julie Crosby, "but sometimes the type of bar dictates the type of drink." The meetings, she says, are very informal, and attendance usually ranges from six to 20 people. The group has already convened at favorite Noe Valley haunts such as The Dubliner and Bliss Bar, both on 24th Street. In December, the meeting will happen at Noe's Bar at 24th and Church streets, with holiday cocktails and pizza from Cybelle's.

Of course, bars aren't the only place to

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Happy Holidays

And best wishes for joy and peace in the new year. The staff of the *Noe Valley Voice* is wandering down to 24th Street for a hot apple cider about now, as we relax and take a month-long vacation. Please save your news and calendar items until the first week of January, when we will be back in the saddle to create the February issue. The deadline for most items is Jan. 15. Call Steve for display ads, 239-1114, or e-mail editor@noevalleyvoice.com.

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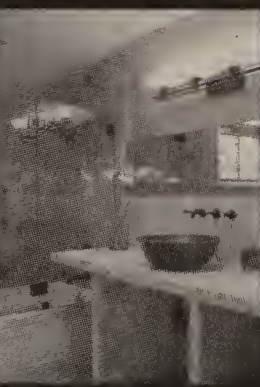
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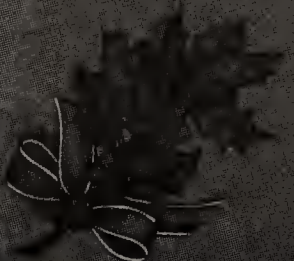


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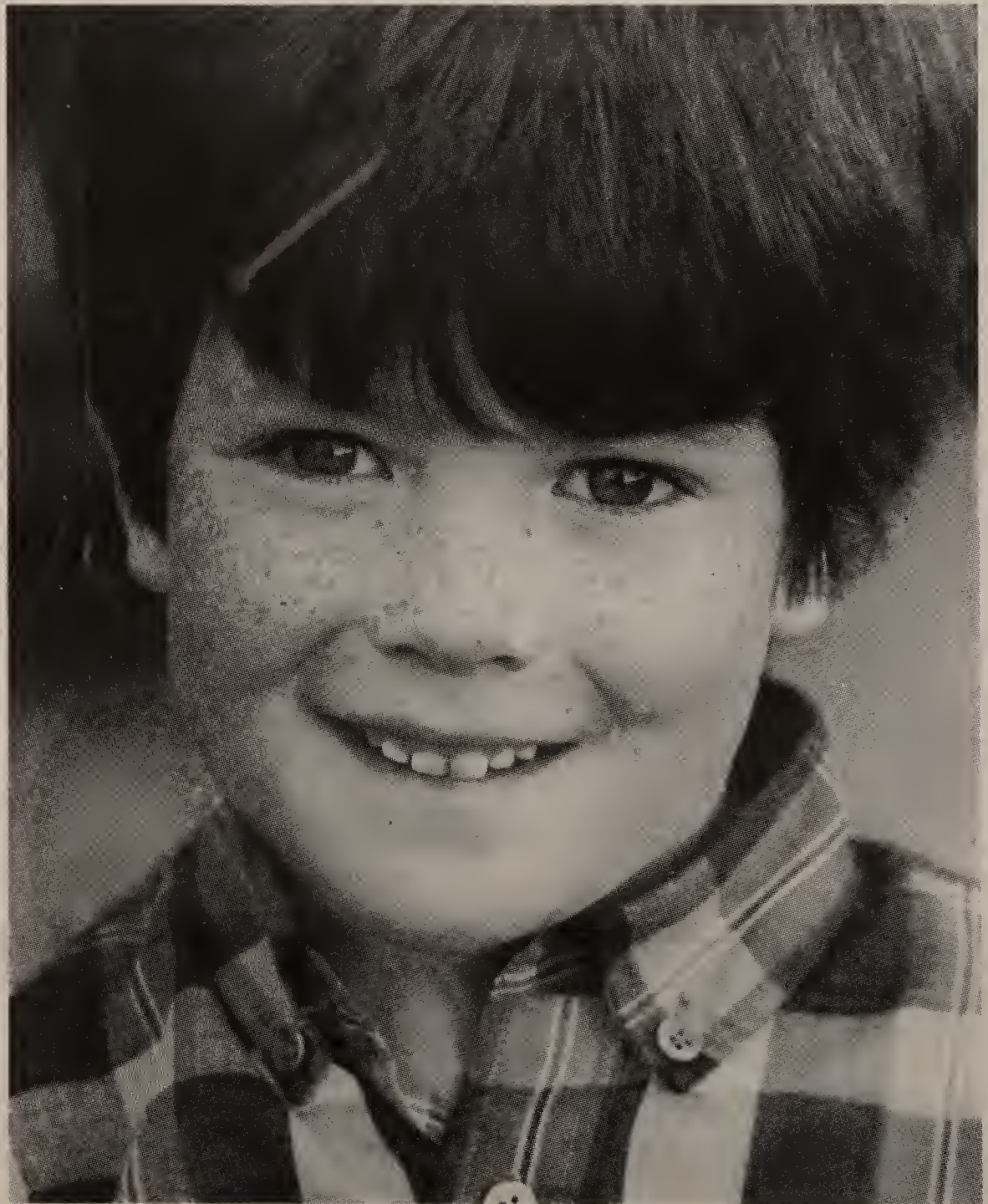
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THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

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The *Voice* welcomes your letters, photos, and stories, particularly on topics relating to Noe Valley. All items should include your name, address, and phone number, and may be edited for brevity or clarity. (Unsigned letters will not be considered for publication.) Unsolicited contributions will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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LETTERS 39¢

It's a Wonderful Life

Editor:

This is regarding the letter from Tim Finn in the October *Voice* about the video store that closed recently at 24th and Church [First Choice Video]. My name is Robert, and I worked there for over 15 years. I remember your daughter, Tim. She always walked through the door with a smile on her face. She was always polite, too. Thank you for the wonderful letter you wrote. I miss the interaction with all the wonderful people of Noe Valley. In 15 years' time, I had problems with maybe three people. The people of Noe Valley are the most pleasant I've ever met (and I must say, the women are the most beautiful in the city).

To all you parents who came in our store: You should be proud of yourselves. All of your children were so well-behaved and respectful. It was always fun to turn around and see a group of kids come walking in, usually for a slumber party, and listen to them all try to find the right movie. Then, the parent in charge would walk in a few minutes later, enjoying what little quiet time he'd had before heading back home with a movie. I watched many kids grow up into little adults that any parent could be proud of.

Finally, to all the adults: I was never much of a talker, but I enjoyed being part of your life and family for so many years. I'm glad that most of you took the time to say you enjoyed the music playing. I enjoyed watching you all sing and dance around the store. Thank you for the memories.

Robert Murray
rooferrob@aol.com

Noe Valley Good Deed

Editor:

On Oct. 22, about 40 women and children got a gift from the staff of Isa's Salon & Spa on Castro Street. Isa's treated the group to free haircuts, styling, makeup application, and eyebrow shaping—the works. The project was a staff-driven idea, done in cooperation with

La Casa de las Madres, a Mission District shelter for battered women and children.

Participating in this good deed were owner Isa Muhawieh (a frequent donor to neighborhood events, most recently the Noe Valley Harvest Festival), artistic directors Lori Koon, Joel Messerer, and Cathy Scarborough; senior stylist Tony Ferri; and estheticians Tara Parenti and Shannon Velasco. The day was a total success and a lot of fun for everyone involved. One of the La Casa clients told the Isa's stylists that she felt like a movie star after her makeover.

Working together, Isa's Salon and La Casa de las Madres made a real difference in people's lives. This is a great example of the kind of business-community partnership that Noe Valley is justifiably well known for. Congratulations to all involved!

Richard May
President, Friends of Noe Valley

Be Alert to Mugging Threat

Editor:

I was mugged on Nov. 17 on Guerrero Street at 25th as I was walking home from BART. I raised such a ruckus that I slowed the robber down enough so that there were witnesses. He got my purse, but a witness got his car description. Within 90 minutes, the police had him and the getaway car driver behind bars. The police told me that I might have put an end to a string of muggings in the Mission/Noe area: all people (mostly women) talking on their cell phone while walking (as I was) or listening to an iPod—distracted instead of vigilantly walking. I asked, "Why isn't there a neighborhood vigilance warning outside the BART?" Both police rolled their eyes to say the local government wouldn't want to admit there's a crime problem. But our neighborhoods and neighbors are in danger. At the very least, Noe Valley citizens need to know how to protect themselves.

I have been most impressed with the police detective, and our Noe Valley neighbors. The

three witnesses who heard me screaming and came to my aid are heroes; one of them followed the getaway car in order to give a detailed description to police. Another pulled over to let me use his cell phone. All were locals just doing their part to help a screaming lady. On Nov. 20, a Folsom Street business called to say they'd found my wallet in the grocery cart of a homeless man who hangs around their shop. I got nothing of value back, but I did get what was left of my wallet.

What the heck are Bevan Dufty and Gavin Newsom doing about street crime? I refuse to be terrorized in my own neighborhood, and I love commuting by public transportation. Thank you to our neighbors who helped me. Please, Bevan and Gavin, do something to stop the crime.

Shira L.

Bring Back the Recycling Basket

Editor:

Today I saw an elderly gentleman at the trash bin at 24th and Vicksburg. He was awkwardly and painfully trying to reach under the recycling basket for bottles and cans tossed in the main bin, his only option now that the baskets have been turned into flowerpots. I wonder if whoever did this project had this scenario in mind. Those baskets actually serve a function and look much better with cans and bottles in them than with some fluffy plants that send the message that 24th Street is too precious for poor people who actually want to use the recycling service at Bell Market and earn some honest money.

Marc Gardner
Elizabeth Street

OUR FACE IS RED, TOO

In the November issue of the *Voice*, the two photos of 96-year-old Bob Johnson, one showing him behind the wheel of his red Mercedes and the other showing him playing chess, were mistakenly credited to Pamela Gerard. In fact, the photos were taken by longtime *Voice* photographer Beverly Tharp. We apologize for the error, and hope Beverly will forgive us. —Ed.

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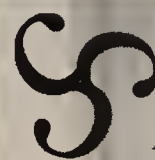

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Christmas Eve Masses

SUNDAY, DEC. 24

4:30 pm — Family Mass with Children's Choir

8:00 pm — Mass in English with Adult Choir

10:00 pm — Mass in English with Adult Choir

12:00 Midnight — Mass in Spanish with Adult Choir

Christmas Day Masses

MONDAY, DEC. 25

8:00 am, 9:15 am, and 5:00 pm

There will be no 10:45 or 12:15 pm Mass on December 25

New Year's Day Mass

MONDAY, JAN. 1, 2007

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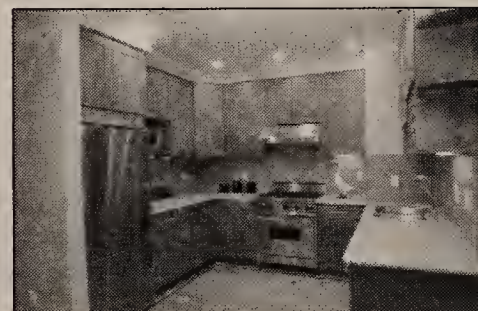
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Friends Walk for Pete's Sake

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

firm, paid for the rental of the rec center.

When the checkbooks were put away, over \$10,000 had been raised to pay for a special diet Blanco needs to help in his battle against glioblastoma multiforme, an aggressive cancer of the brain.

The Blanco family was more than touched. "We were pretty overwhelmed," said Mallette after the event. Pete Blanco added, "The walk was such an uplifting and positive thing—it was just a great infusion of positive energy to have all our friends come together at once and express their love and support."

Families Met at Preschool

Blanco, 40, a general contractor, is currently undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment. He also is in a clinical trial at U.C. San Francisco and gets close oversight at home from Mallette, a registered nurse at the university hospital.

The Blanco family is part of a group of parents who met at Debra King School and Julia Ready's childcare, two well-known Noe Valley preschool programs.

Many of the parents are on child-raising parallels, and have kids whose ages are similar. They got to know each other during after-school activities and play

dates, and by sharing babysitters.

The news that cancer had struck one of their own came as a shock.

"It just throws you a curve ball," said Feely. "One minute your kindergarten choices are the most important things in life, and the next you're faced with something much more serious."

'Could Have Been Any of Us'

Until recently, the Blanco family had lived for more than 15 years in Noe Valley and nearby Glen Park. After Ramona "graduated" from Debra King last summer, they moved to San Rafael. In September, they invited friends to Marin County to help celebrate Ramona's fifth birthday.

"About one week later, Pete was having headaches and decided to go in and have them checked out. And that's when they found out he had a brain tumor," said Noe Street resident and friend Erika Holmgren.

"It was really scary. All of us have two children, as Pete does, and we felt that it could have been any of us that got the same diagnosis," said Holmgren.

Feely heard about the family's plight a short time later in October, during a reunion picnic for many of the preschool families. "I had to sit down when I was told. Tia and I were pregnant at the same time, and I feel a certain bond with her," said Feely.

As word of Blanco's illness spread,

everyone began searching for ways to help. Feely's first thought was to organize families into a collective of meal preparers, which would afford Mallette more time to care for Blanco and the children. "Instinctively, you always want to make a casserole," she said.

That wasn't practical, however. One feature of Blanco's treatment is a plant-based, near-vegan diet that is designed to help him better tolerate his chemotherapy—and help fight the cancer itself. A special chef does the grocery shopping, cooks meals at the home twice a week, and leaves enough food to cover the remaining days.

"We decided to do a fundraiser to pay for the chef and meals," said Feely. To get the word out, she set up a web site (www.playgroundtoplayground.org). Six other families also played key roles, as did many children, who came up with kiddie-art drawings for T-shirts, which were later sold to walkers.

The group hoped the mini walkathon, with \$50 pledges, would bring in at least \$5,000—enough to pay Blanco's meal costs for four months.

"We raised \$11,000. Isn't that amazing?" said Feely. "There were a couple of big donations, but for the most part, it was people just donating \$50."

In late November, the web site was still up, and donations and well wishes were still rolling in.

Blanco remained positive, buoyed by the outpouring of support from his friends and community. Said Pete, "I mean, cancer sucks, but we feel so blessed to be the recipients of all this good will." ■



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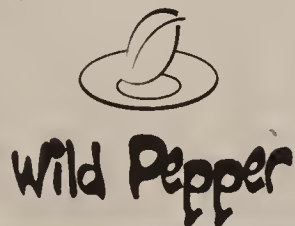
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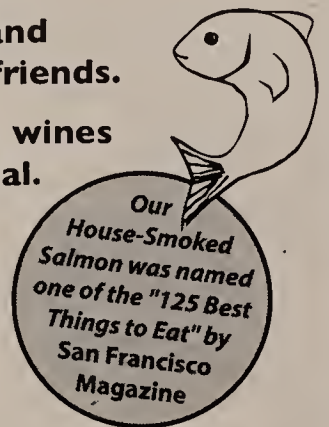


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Dufty Doesn't Miss A Burp, er, Beat

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

which is why he, like all new parents, is sorely in need of rest. "I'm drawing on all my political skills as a negotiator to figure out what she wants at 3 a.m.," he says with a laugh. "Sometimes it's as successful as I've been with Real Food's, and it's a long night."

The Real Food Company stalemate began when Nutraceutical Corporation purchased the once-popular natural foods store on 24th Street and then abruptly closed it in August 2003, ostensibly for remodeling. Citing problems with liability and other costs, the corporation has left the store shuttered for three years.

"I didn't want to make it a campaign issue, but I have been contacted by Nutraceutical, and I think they actually felt badly that I was getting criticized for the lack of progress," Dufty says. "They acknowledged how much I've tried to reach out to them, and they have pledged to meet with me this month."

In the meantime, Dufty says, he is urging them to take the first step. "I've been trying to work quietly to get them to come to the neighborhood to discuss their plans and talk about how to heal their relationships, but I can't make any promises."

Another of his priorities for the coming term is to make sure the Noe Valley Library renovation stays on track. So far, he says, the bi-monthly neighborhood ad-

visory committee meetings are going well. "There's a little creative tension, and that's what the purpose of this sort of citizens committee is, to be engaged with the construction firm and the public library to make sure we're taking care of due process.... I think we're on track for re-opening next October or November." Also high on Dufty's agenda are issues like reducing crime, making Muni more efficient, and improving public schools.

"Those are my major priorities. I did take a strong stand on the [recent] foot patrol legislation, which apparently angered the mayor greatly, but I think public safety is my most important responsibility as a city leader, and I'm not happy with the direction of the [Police] Department," Dufty says. "I'm not satisfied that the leadership is being creative and responsive in addressing increased crime throughout our city, and in neighborhoods in District 8 that have never before had people feel unsafe like they feel these days."

On the schools issue, he has asked Aaron Peskin, who is likely to continue as president of the Board of Supervisors, to name him chair of the joint city/school district committee. "I have tremendous interest in improving our schools, and I'm even more motivated because my plan is to have Sidney attend public schools here in San Francisco," Dufty says.

Supervisor Dufty welcomes input from his constituents. You can e-mail him at bevan.dufty@sfgov.org or call his office at 554-6968, which now includes a changing table, glider, diaper bag, and other baby accoutrements. ■

Tasting Good Cheer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

find delicious drinks. Now that the social season is upon us—holiday parties, Christmas feasts, and New Year's Eve celebrations—it is the perfect time to discover new wines and spirits.

Winter Warmers

"Port sales double or even triple during the cooler months," says Drew Spaulding, general manager of the wine store PlumpJack on 24th Street near Sanchez Street. As an everyday option, he says, customers enjoy the Smith-Woodhouse Lodge Reserve, which sells for \$18 per bottle. The Graham's 1996 Malvedos Vintage Port (\$46) and Dow's 1982 Colheita Tawny Port (\$58) are his picks for special occasions.

Crosby of the Noe Valley Drinking Club suggests spirits for a cold-weather warmup. She recommends mixing up a Smuggler, made of hot chocolate, peppermint schnapps, and whipped cream, or the classic hot toddy with hot tea, two shots of brandy, honey, and lemon.

Scotch, Spaulding notes, is another popular winter drink. He says the best-seller at PlumpJack right now is a new line of blended malts from Jon, Mark & Robbo's Easy Drinking Whisky Company, which Spaulding says has "tremendous depth and character." They retail for about \$30 per bottle.

Fit for a Feast

What wines go well with Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa dinner? "Holiday wine pairings are always tricky, because so many of our traditional holiday feasts include a huge array of flavors," says Spaulding. "As a general rule, we suggest wines that have a lot of fruit and very little oak, whether red or white." Drew recommends the A to Z Pinot Noir (\$18), or a "fruity, off-dry white" such as a Riesling or Gewürztraminer with a turkey feast.

Longtime Chattanooga Street resident Rita Abraldes loves traditional Cuban holiday foods. The co-founder of the popu-

lar restaurant Charanga at Mission and 20th streets, Abraldes says her menu might include tamales navideños, Cuban roast pork with black beans and yucca, and Spanish paella. She recommends a Navaró Gewürztraminer (about \$27) or Crios de Susana Balbo, Torrontés, Mendoza, Argentina (about \$13), with lighter entrees and shellfish-based dishes. For a holiday meal that includes roasted and grilled meats, Abraldes prefers a structured Syrah such as Domaine des Girasols Rhône 2001 from Rasteau in Côtes du Rhône, France (about \$13).

Walid Masoud, manager of Urban Cellars at 3821 24th Street near Church Street, recommends some favorite reds for drinking throughout the holiday season: Napa Valley's Avalon Cabernet Sauvignon (\$9); the Trapique Malbec from Mendoza, Argentina (\$9); and Kent Rasmussen Pinot Noir (\$31), which is grown in Carneros. Urban Cellars' wine importer Jim Wadsworth suggests starting a meal with a white, such as the Humbrecht Tokay Pinot Gris (\$20), which he says is "on the sweeter side" and works well with a cheese or salad course.

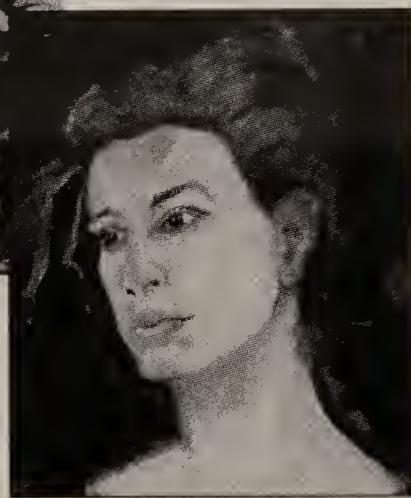
A Sparkling New Year

Bubbly wines are a time-honored favorite for ringing in a new year, and Noe Valley's wine lovers have several sparkling suggestions. Bonny Doon's Moscato d'Asti (\$15), a sweet sparkling wine made from Muscat grapes, is "a great choice for a party because it's fun to drink and has a lower alcohol content than most wines," says Abraldes. Masoud suggests Roederer Estate (\$23), a California sparkling wine, or Henriot Champagne (\$40) for New Year's Eve. For a large group, Spaulding likes Domaine J. Laurens Cremant de Limoux, France, for \$11; or Gruet Blanc-de-Noirs from Albuquerque, New Mexico, for \$12 per bottle. French Champagnes at PlumpJack begin at around \$30 per bottle and top out at \$225 for the 1990 Krug Champagne.

Now that you know what to drink, find people with whom to share the fun by logging on to the Noe Valley Drinking Club web site at <http://nvdc.net>. ■

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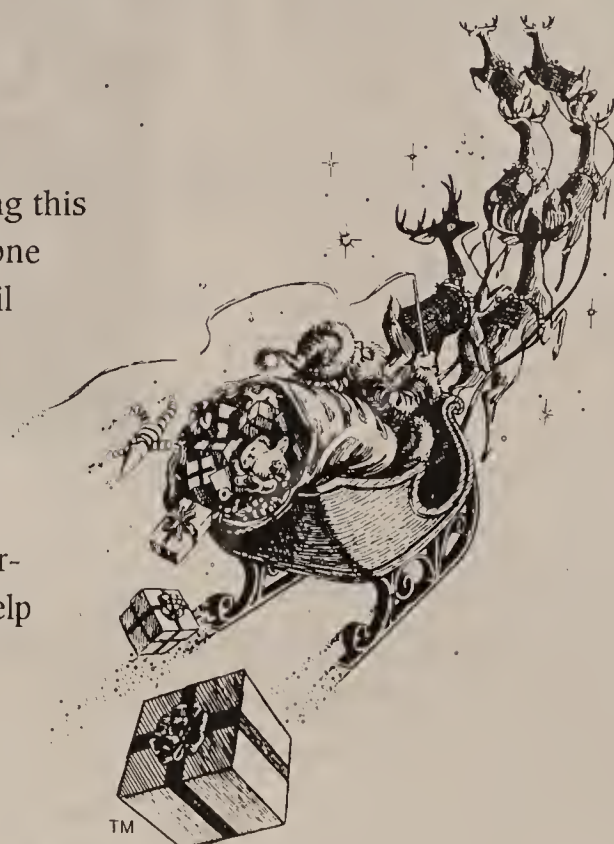
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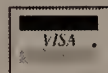
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Barber Pole Twirls For 53 Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

artist, get a trade!" So when a friend asked Smith to join her at barber school, "I said okay, because I knew you could work anywhere you wind up. It's a skill you can take anywhere." The skill is so transferable, in fact, that when Smith travels the country, she's consistently offered work. She says, "I've never visited a shop where I have not been offered a job right away." She credits that to her 30 years of experience and her unique skills—she's one of few present-day barbers who give shaves. And it's her shaves that bring her clients from near and far.

This Thursday morning, 88-year-old Richard Hervig, who hails from Iowa City, Iowa, sits in her chair. He's visiting his daughter Jonna in Oakland, but comes across the bay for the works—a shave, shampoo, and a haircut. Jonna is a violist for the San Francisco Opera, and her father is getting a kick out of telling violist



Now vacant, this small storefront at the corner of Diamond and 24th streets was home to Mike Skoufos' barbershop in 1957.

Photo courtesy of Mike Skoufos and Stephanie Smith



Longtime haircutters Mike Skoufos and Stephanie Smith are used to seeing furry creatures at Smith's shop on 24th Street near Diamond, Of Barbers & Bears.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

riddles, and delights in the fact that the Opera's afternoon performance is *The Barber of Seville*.

As Hervig checks Smith's work in the mirror, he smiles and tells her, "You have restored my natural beauty." After Hervig pays for the haircut, plus a few dollars for tip, and takes his leave, Smith remarks, "All of our customers have stories. I like to hear them, so I encourage them. And some of them, like Richard [Hervig], they'll tell me *all* the stories."

Skoufos laughs and says the one difference in style between him and his daughter is: "She talks. I don't talk."

Skoufos, 77, and Smith, 51, have worked side by side for 29 years and report that in all that time they've had only one argument. Now, neither of them can remember what the dispute was about. "We have a lot of fun in here," Smith says.

After she joined him at 24th and Noe streets, together they moved to a new location at 24th and Church. That's when

Skoufos decided to retire, at age 60. "So I gave the shop over to her," he says. "She took over the barbershop, and now I work for her instead of she works for me."

When they moved to 25th and Church, Smith changed the name to J&S Barber and Co., "J" being the initial of Smith's now ex-husband. After nine years, the owner sold the building so they moved again, this time to their current space on 24th between Castro and Diamond streets.

Smith named the shop Of Barbers & Bears as a way of promoting her art, which is designing and sewing teddy bears. She makes the bears mostly from old fur coats. As she explains, "Usually people inherit them from a family member. Fur coats used to be a real status symbol. So these furs meant something to people, but you get them, and who's going to wear them anymore?" So she transforms them into stuffed animals.

A number of mohair bears are on display in her window, but most of her fur

bear orders are custom. She'll take a name embroidered into the lining of the coat and sew it onto the bear's foot, or use the lining from a pocket to make a hat. "I do a lot of customizing," she says. "Nothing is factory- or mass-produced.... Like being a barber. Every client is different, every head is different. You customize the cut to look different on each person. I don't think any of our haircuts are exactly the same, huh?" she asks her father.

"No," he replies. "It fits the client. We'll do crew cuts, flat top, short hair, long hair—whatever the client wants." Skoufos says one customer he's had for 50 years wants his hair cut exactly the same way every time. "Flat top with sides—long on the sides, flat on top. Fifty years and I can't get him to change!"

Father and daughter have a wide mix of clients—from Noe Valley oldtimers to children getting their hair cut for the first time. They see artists, cab drivers, writers, even former mayor Art Agnos and sons. They see families of three generations, many of whom have "never gone to anybody other than us," says Smith. "They've only had two barbers their whole life."

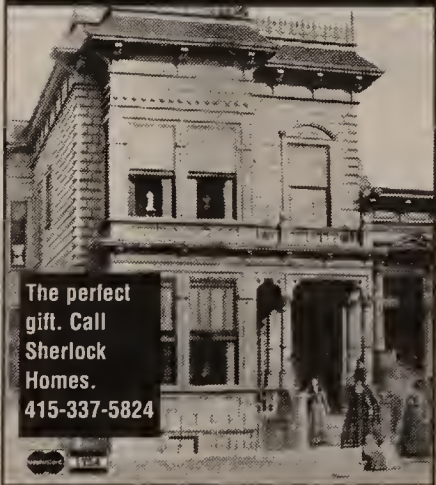
Brendan Glaetzer, 23, is one of them. He's been with Skoufos and Smith for more than 20 years. On a Thursday morning in late October, he and his father, Richard, are both booked with Smith, but since Skoufos is available, the elder Glaetzer takes a seat in his chair.

Father and son have similar thick curly hair, but Richard's is salt-and-pepper and Brendan's is dark. Skoufos and Smith set to work, standing side by side. It's a classic picture, as father and daughter cut the hair of father and son.

Kate Volkman is writing a series of articles on longtime businesses in Noe Valley. She also helps families and companies record and preserve their history.

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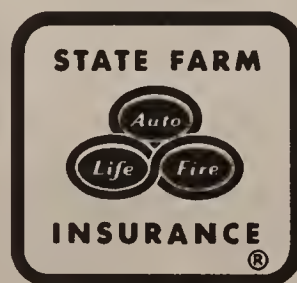


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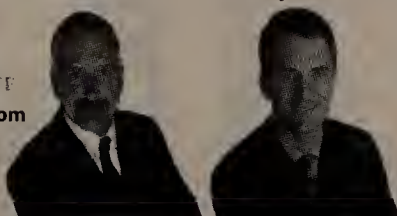
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Arsenic and Old Playgrounds

Test at Dolores Park Hopes to Raise Awareness

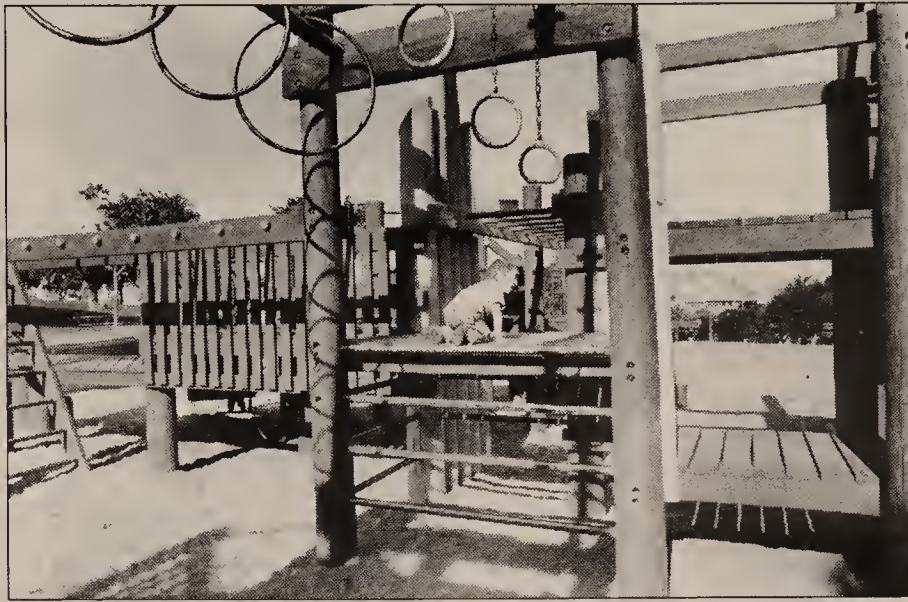
By Olivia Boler

On Oct. 7, the Center for Environmental Health (CEH) and the San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Council, two non-governmental non-profit advocacy groups, conducted a test for arsenic at Mission Dolores Park Playground to create community awareness about the presence of the known carcinogen. The playground, located at the southern end of the park, near 20th Street, has structures made with pressure-treated wood that contains chromate copper arsenate (CCA), a common wood preservative until it was banned for residential use in 2004.

In California, any play structure made before the ban, as well as anything in people's homes built with CCA-treated lumber, including decks, benches, and planter boxes, probably has arsenic in it. Since 1992, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) has not used CCA-treated wood for any new play structures. The city also regularly applies a protective seal to the older structures in the parks.

The October arsenic test involved wiping the surface of the play structures and taking a sample of the playground sand found right around them. (Arsenic can leach into the soil and bond with it.) While there are no documented cases of a child getting arsenic poisoning from playing on the city's play structures, scientists are still investigating the long-term effects. Some studies show that prolonged exposure to arsenic-treated wood increases the chances of developing cancer in the lungs, skin, bladder, and kidneys.

The Parks Council and CEH in conjunction with Friends of Dolores Park Playground, a community group, decided to do the test at Dolores Playground because the play structures were recently sealed (in July) and there are a lot of children who use



While a test at Dolores Park Playground showed that arsenic levels in wood play structures were below legal limits, park advocates want parents to play it safe by urging their children to wash their hands and keep sand out of their mouths.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

the park every day. For the Parks Council, the arsenic testing is part of a larger playground safety "report card" program it started in early 2006 for all of San Francisco's playgrounds. "When CEH contacted us about doing the test, we thought it was a great way to enhance community awareness," says Colleen Flynn, who manages the council's stewardship program.

The test results showed that arsenic levels are low at Dolores Playground, but because the structure was recently sealed, they should be negative for CCA, says Juliana Gonzalez, the coordinator of CEH's Safe Playgrounds Project. "The values were 2.9 micrograms per 100 square centimeters on the wooden boat," she says of one of the play structures at the playground. "The risk factor associated with these levels is one in 10,000 cases of cancer associated with regular exposure to this source of arsenic." CEH considers "regular exposure" to mean a child playing on the structure every day and occasionally putting his hands in his mouth while playing. That child would have a 1 in 10,000 risk of developing cancer in

his lifetime. While this is below the legal limit, Gonzalez would like to see the risk lowered to 1 in 1 million.

According to the city's web site, there are 32 play structures in San Francisco that have some CCA-treated wood. The proper procedure for containment is to apply a sealant on the wood that acts by confining the arsenic. Twenty-three city playgrounds, including Mission Dolores, Christopher Park, Potrero Hill, Glen Park, and McLaren Park, have all been sealed between 2004 and 2006. (Noe Courts Playground and Douglass Playground do not have CCA-treated wooden structures; Upper Noe Playground is currently going through a renovation and is due to reopen in 2008.) The sealant must be reapplied every two years. But according to Gonzalez, Dolores Playground's wood structures are not sealed with the correct sealant.

"They're using a green paint, and paint cracks and it's slippery. They should be using a stain that penetrates the wood. This is the most current technique to contain CCA." Also, high-traffic areas on the Dolores Park

structures are already showing signs of wear, Gonzalez says. She says CEH appreciates all that RPD is doing, but that "there's a real need to stay on top of this."

Rose Marie Dennis, director of public affairs at the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, at press time had not received any information from CEH or the Parks Council. "The department can't come out with a position on any recommendations until we see what they have to say," Dennis says. CEH and the Council are currently drafting a letter to RPD with test results and recommendations, and will send it to the department some time in December.

Dennis says that while she recognizes the efforts of CEH and the Council to raise awareness, she does not want parents to panic. "There are no documented cases of any problems with CCA in our play structures. Of course, we would not leave these playgrounds open for use if we thought they were dangerous. Our big concern at RPD is not freaking out parents about this."

She says that as money becomes available, the city will replace the playground structures as it did in 2005 at Walter Haas Playground on Diamond Heights Boulevard. That money came from a bond program passed by San Francisco voters in 2000, as well as from gifts and grants.

Flynn agrees that the city is taking measures to deal with arsenic, but stresses that her organization's goal is simply to create community awareness. "We want to see neighborhood and 'friends' groups advocating for their parks. If anyone is interested in starting a group, we would be excited to work with them."

Dennis of RPD welcomes these groups as well, and encourages them to contact her department with any questions about arsenic testing as well as fundraising. "It's good to take a sense of ownership in your parks," she says. "As for the arsenic, we just don't want to build up any unnecessary anxiety." ■

For information on CCA testing and playground safety, go to www.safe2play.org or www.sfnpc.org. To contact Rec and Park, call 415-831-2700 or e-mail www.sfgov.org/site/recpark.

What Parents and Care Givers Can Do

- Wash children's hands with soap and water after they've played on an older wooden playground structure.
- Check for splinters on the structures—the exposed wood has broken through the sealant, so arsenic can therefore enter the bloodstream more rapidly.
- Encourage babies, toddlers, and very young children not to eat sand or put their hands in their mouths, especially near a CCA-treated play structure.
- Check any play structures in your own home for CCA-treated wood. A kit is available at the Safe Playgrounds Project web site, www.safe2play.org.
- Ask your daycare providers about play structures at their facilities.
- Use a tablecloth on park picnic tables and don't eat on CCA-treated play structures.

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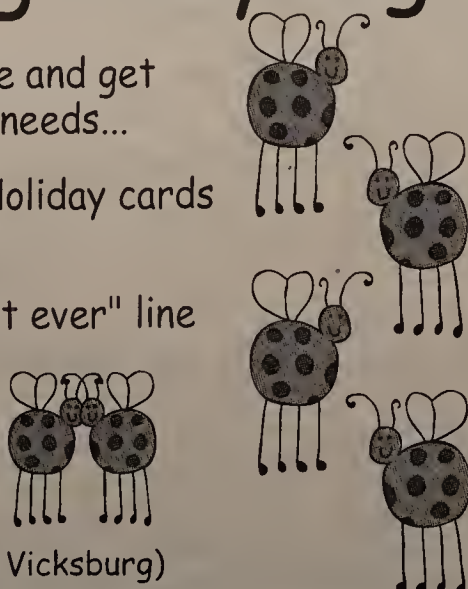
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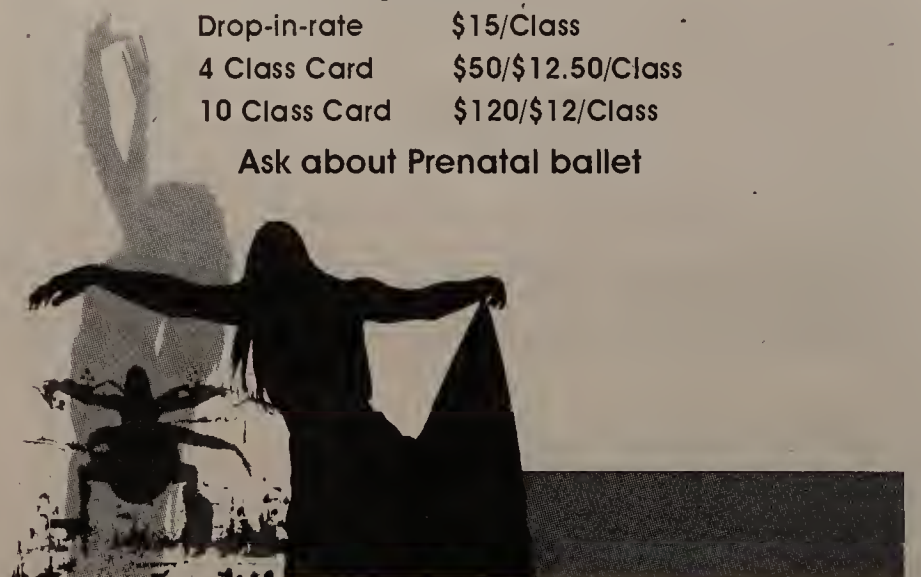
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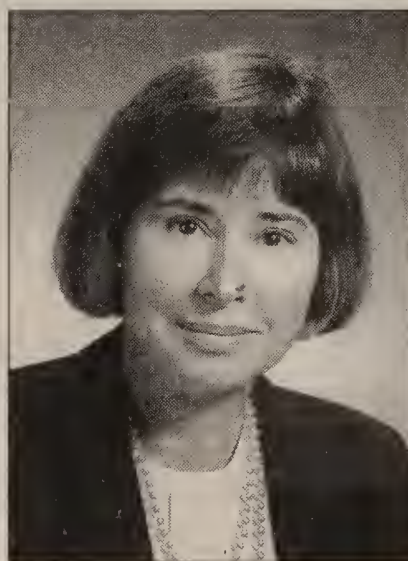
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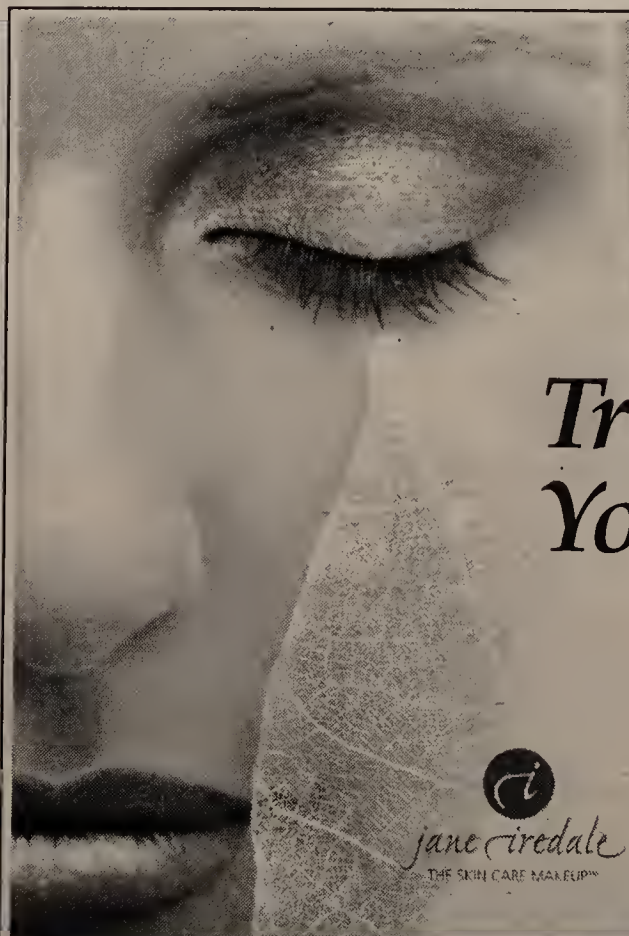
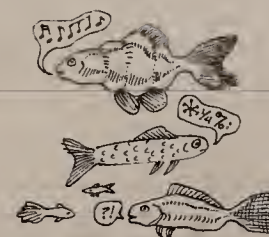
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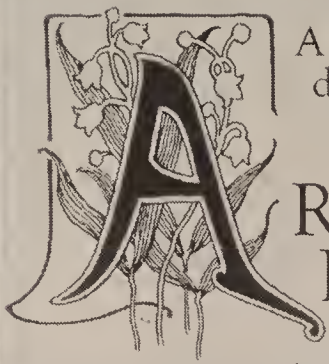
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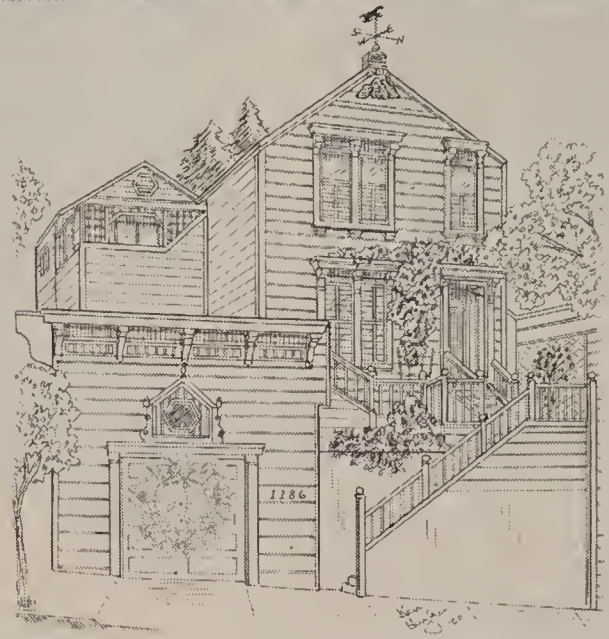
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The Cost of Living in Noe

Baseball Slugger's Home for Sale

By Corrie M. Anders

San Francisco Giants star Moises Alou didn't waste any time bidding adios to Noe Valley, once the baseball team let his father, Felipe Alou, go as coach.

Moises' custom home on Noe Street, which he purchased nearly brand new in 2005, is on the market for just under \$2 million—a price tag that is fast becoming a routine benchmark in this upscale neighborhood.

In fact, three Noe Valley homes sold for \$2 million or more in October, according to sales data compiled for the *Voice* by Zephyr Real Estate.

But it is the manse of Alou and his wife, Austria, that is drawing the oohs and ahs—from local residents, bloggers from around the country, and prospective buyers intrigued with the idea of owning a

piece of celebrity.

The asking price is \$1,940,000 for the three-story house, located at 1407 Noe Street near Duncan. The 2,300-square-foot contemporary-style property has three bedrooms, 2½ baths, and killer views of downtown San Francisco and the East Bay.

Built in 1956, the house was completely remodeled in 2005, the same year Alou joined the team, in part so he could play for his father. The Giants announced at the end of last season that the team would not renew the senior Alou's contract—and his son last month told reporters there was a 99 percent chance he would not return to the Giants. (Subsequently, he signed a one-year \$8.5 million contract with the New York Mets.)

"We're really getting a great reaction" to the listing, said Alou's real estate agent, Holly Peterson of Sotheby's International Realty (in San Francisco). But citing privacy, Peterson refused to discuss any aspect of her client's two-year stint in the neighborhood.

While the property attracted the curious to Noe Street, 12 families found other homes to their liking and closed escrow in October. That was two more than in September, but considerably below the 21 sales of a year earlier, when the real estate market was extraordinarily strong.

A Snapshot of Noe Valley Rents**

Type of Unit	Number in Sample	Range of Rents November 2006	Average November 2006	Average A Year Ago
Studio	6	\$1,150 – \$1,450	\$1,317 / mo.	\$1,131 / mo.
1-bedroom	11	\$1,350 – \$2,000	\$1,661 / mo.	\$1,513 / mo.
2-bedroom	16	\$1,650 – \$3,900	\$2,619 / mo.	\$2,489 / mo.
3-bedroom	12	\$2,550 – \$4,700	\$3,328 / mo.	\$3,378 / mo.
4+-bedroom	1	\$6,000 – \$6,000	\$6,000 / mo.	\$4,475 / mo.

** Survey based on a sample of 46 Noe Valley listings appearing on *Craigslist.com* from Nov. 1 to 14, 2006. NVV 12/06

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Noe Valley Home Sales*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price As % of List Price
Single-family homes						
Oct. 2006	12	\$876,000	\$2,750,000	\$1,525,950	24	102%
Sept. 2006	10	\$947,000	\$2,311,000	\$1,378,900	45	99%
Oct. 2005	21	\$1,125,000	\$5,300,000	\$1,657,857	22	111%
Condominiums						
Oct. 2006	4	\$821,000	\$1,349,000	\$1,121,250	58	101%
Sept. 2006	5	\$615,000	\$1,225,000	\$825,600	37	102%
Oct. 2005	6	\$677,500	\$1,100,000	\$839,083	23	113%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
Oct. 2006	1	\$1,125,000	\$1,125,000	\$1,125,000	91	102%
Sept. 2006	2	\$1,070,000	\$1,150,000	\$1,110,000	35	106%
Oct. 2005	5	\$1,150,000	\$1,805,000	\$1,595,800	31	118%
5+-unit buildings						
Oct. 2006	0	—	—	—	—	—
Sept. 2006	1	\$2,350,000	\$2,350,000	\$2,350,000	27	94%
Oct. 2005	0	—	—	—	—	—

* Sales figures include all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. In this survey, Noe Valley is defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The *Voice* thanks Zephyr Real Estate (www.zephyrsf.com) for supplying the sales data. NVV 12/06

The 43 percent plunge in sales from October 2005 may have been a statistical quirk, however, since this year's October sales were more in line with the 12 transactions for that month in 2004, 16 sales in 2003, and nine deals each in 2002 and 2001. "We're running a pretty calm market this year," said Randall Kostick, Zephyr's general sales manager.

October buyers on average paid 2 percent more than the asking price, and the homes sold for an average of slightly more than \$1.5 million and closed escrow in less than one month.

Among the sales were three multimillion-dollar homes, all featuring four bedrooms and 3½ baths:

• A \$2,750,000 home in the 500 block of Valley Street, between Castro and Diamond streets;

• A \$2,749,000 home in the 3900 block of 23rd Street, between Noe and Sanchez streets; and

• A \$2,265,000 home in the 400 block of Duncan Street, between Noe and Sanchez streets.

Buyers paid \$1,349,000 for the most expensive condominium sold in October—a three-bedroom, three-bath unit located in the 500 block of 27th Street between Castro and Noe streets.

It was one of four attached homes sold during the month; the condos had an average sales price of \$1.1 million. ■

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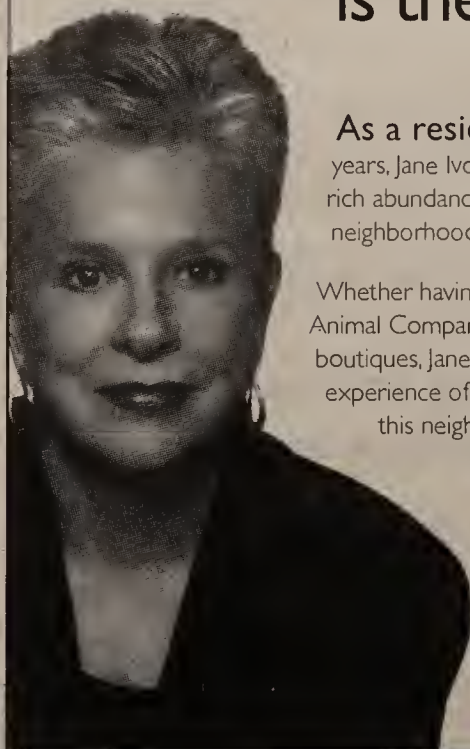
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Whether having Lunch at LeZinc, or shopping at the Animal Company, or browsing among the many boutiques, Jane's local knowledge comes from the experience of living among the treasures that make this neighborhood so unique.

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POLICE BEAT

Police Beat is a review of crime incidents in Noe Valley, occurring in the most recent month for which we have statistics. The area covered in the Voice survey is bounded by Grand View, 21st, Fair Oaks, and 30th streets. The October 2006 crime information was culled from incident reports filed at both Mission and Ingleside police stations.

Overall Crime Down in October

By Erin O'Briant

Neighborhood crime dropped to 76 reported incidents during the month of October, down from 96 in September. Some cases, including an armed car chase through the southern half of the neighborhood, resulted in arrests.

The 76 incidents included several cases of assault, three drug cases (one involving the sale of heroin), 15 burglaries, 19 incidents of theft, six robberies, nine acts of vandalism, and 17 auto thefts.

But there were just three reported street robberies in Noe Valley in October, and none involved the use of a weapon. That number was down from September, when armed robbers struck at least eight times.

Rude Welcome to San Francisco

Many of the thefts reported in October involved home break-ins.

A 66-year-old woman living in the 3500 block of 21st Street, who had recently moved to San Francisco, was in tears over the burglary of her home the afternoon of Sunday, Oct. 15, says Officer Lorraine Lombardo, who responded to the case. The suspect took irreplaceable family jewelry, along with the victim's laptop computer, car keys, wallet, checkbook, and credit cards.

Lombardo speculates that the suspect may have scoped out the house from the J-Church shelter across the street, and she urges neighbors to keep an eye out for suspicious characters. The victim had been away from her house for less than an hour when the burglary took place.

Two Arrests in Police Car Chase

Police officers gave chase to a car in the Bayview District of San Francisco after its occupants allegedly opened fire on a crowd of people there during the late morning of Wednesday, Oct. 11. The driver of the car managed to escape from Bayview officers, but the car was spotted by officers on Valencia Street near St. Luke's Hospital, and the chase continued into Noe Valley.

The driver hit parked cars at 29th and Dolores streets, then continued on to the 300 block of Miguel Street. There, the occupants abandoned the car; witnesses saw them flee with guns in their possession. Officers found two of the suspects hiding behind a vehicle in the 100 block of Matteo Street; two semi-automatic handguns were found abandoned in the 300 block of Chenery Street.

Although officers suspected a third suspect was involved, that person has not been located, says Ingleside Police Station Captain Paul Chignell. The suspects were arrested on multiple felonies involving gun charges. One was a parolee at large with no bail.

The Voice thanks Noe Valley Police Officer Andrew MacIlrath for his help in providing data for this month's Police Beat.

Reporting an Incident

To report a crime in progress, call 911. To report a non-emergency problem, call 553-0123. For online reporting of crimes such as vandalism, car thefts, lost property, and harassing phone calls, go to www.sfgov.org/site/police.

Merchants Step Up Security in Wake of Burglaries

By Erin O'Briant

A scary bar robbery and a string of burglaries plagued the merchants of Noe Valley in late October and early November, prompting leaders of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA) to consider new ways to curb neighborhood crime.

"We are looking into doing an analysis of hiring a private security firm," notes NVMPA co-president Teresa Gay. The firm, if hired, would be managed by the association. She encourages local business owners to implement security systems if they don't already have them, and to be sure to report any crime, actual or attempted.

The recent crime wave began just before 1 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 27, when two men held up The Peaks bar, at 1316 Castro Street near 24th Street. According to police, one male suspect entered the bar and pointed a gun at the bartender, then robbed individual patrons. The man's accomplice remained at the door. No one was hurt. But for merchants and police, the evening was just starting.

Sometime between 1 and 2 a.m., the alarm at Bliss Bar, located at 4026 24th Street, was activated when burglars began tampering with a window. "They gained access by prying open the front window with a crowbar," explains Katina Letheule, who owns Bliss Bar with her husband, Pierre. "We have an alarm with a motion sensor, so when that went off, they fled. On our video surveillance, we were able to see a man with a hoodie who tried opening the cash register, which was empty." Nothing was stolen.

Soon after that, police responded to another alarm at Joe's 24th Street Café, at 3853 24th Street near Vicksburg Street. The front door was forced open, but it was unclear to officers what, if anything, had been taken. A witness saw two men leave the premises and get into a maroon vehicle similar to a 1990s Mercury Cougar; the suspects sped off.

The alarm at Noe Bagel, located at 3933 24th Street near Sanchez Street, went off at about 3 a.m. Two doors were damaged and the office was in disarray, but fortunately there was no money in the safe and nothing was taken.

During the next several days, the break-ins and attempted break-ins continued, this time at PastaGina and Bacco, both located on Diamond Street near 24th Street, and at Subs and Cottage Industries on 24th Street, according to Gay. Burglars also broke into Café Ponte, next to PastaGina. "They broke in through one of my windows to gain access to PastaGina—we share a door between our spaces," explains café owner Bruce Ponte. "They pried open the door and then pried a safe that was bolted to the floor [in PastaGina] loose and took it." Ponte has installed new locks that make it impossible to lift the windows out of the frames.

By mid-November, the business burglaries had died down, possibly because of increased police presence in the neighborhood. According to Captain John Goldberg of the San Francisco Police Department's Mission Station, "There was an increase in officers dedicated to the area, both [in] uniform and plain clothes." So far, no arrests have been made.

According to Gay, members of the Noe Valley Merchants Association will discuss how to keep businesses safe from crime—and whether or not to hire a security firm—at their next meeting, set for 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 31. For more information, e-mail info@noevalleymerchants.com.

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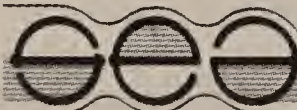
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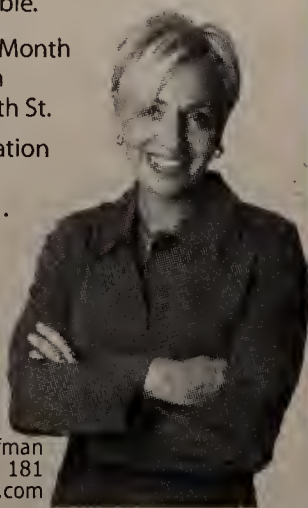
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SHORT TAKES

Santa Is a Secret Agent

Kids of all ages are invited to confide their Christmas wishes to Santa in front of the Zephyr Real Estate office at 4040 24th Street from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9. James Romeo Holloway, the Zephyr real estate agent who plays Old St. Nick, says, "I'm not officially trained as a Santa, but I have been doing this with delight for Zephyr for more than seven years." He'll pass out candy and listen to everyone's wish list. As an African-American Santa, Holloway says, he gets big smiles even from the grownups. "I have fun with it and I never grow up," he adds. Parents, don't forget the camera. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is scheduled to co-host the event.

Gift Wrap for Library

Artery and the Noe Valley Library Campaign are wrapping holiday gifts for shoppers on three Saturdays in December to raise funds for the local library branch renovation. Just bring packages by Artery, located at 1311 Church Street at 25th Street, on Dec. 9, 16, and 23 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Artery staff and library volunteers will beautify gifts for a suggested donation of \$1 to \$5 per gift, with all proceeds benefiting the library's interior renovation. "We have a lot of gorgeous and fun wrapping papers and ribbons to choose from," says Artery owner Paula Benton. She'll also offer recycled and nontraditional wrappings such as maps, Sunday comics, and kids' paintings.

Drop off gifts and pick them up later, or wait and enjoy a cup of hot cider. To volunteer to help wrap, contact Benton at bentonp@sprynet.com or call Artery at 285-0235.

Stroll Past Holiday Windows

The second annual Noel Stroll on and around 24th Street is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 9, from 5 to 9 p.m. Says Teresa Gay, co-

president of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association, "We'll have carolers and musicians on the street, and all the stores will be open with special holiday discounts and refreshments." The hub of the stroll will be the Zephyr Real Estate office at 4040 24th Street, where participants will enjoy a holiday raffle and a chance to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. Maps will be posted around the neighborhood for participants, and merchants are decorating their windows for the event. (On Dec. 8, the merchants association will hold a Best Store Window Decorations contest, with prizes totalling \$600.)

Noe Valleyans may be surprised to see decorations on the windows of Real Food Company, the deserted former grocery on 24th Street. Donna Davis of Forbeadin' is coordinating that effort, along with Diane Barrett of Indigo V. They've developed a Winter Wonderland theme and plan to recruit students from the School of the Arts to decorate the windows. Davis explains, "Hopefully, it will be complete for the Noel Stroll event, but it's not specifically for that event, it's for the community." The merchants received permission for the display from Nutraceutical Corporation, which owns the building.

New Water Pipes for Church St.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has announced that it will start replacing water mains along the Noe Valley section of Church Street early next year. According to the PUC, construction on the east side of Church Street between 30th and 21st streets should begin in January and continue through spring. Work on the west side of the street, between 19th and 30th, will wait until June. Weather permitting, crews will work Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

During those hours, there will be some construction noise, and parking space will be temporarily reduced, but residents and businesses will be able to retain access to their garages. Muni routes will not change, but there may be delays in service. The PUC does not expect interruptions in water flow. For more information, call J. Flores Construction, SFPUC's contractor, at 337-2934.

In Search of S.F. Poets

A new literary series sponsored by San Francisco Poet Laureate Jack Hirschman, Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, and the San Francisco Public Library offers an opportunity for poets to share their work. Poets Eleven is a citywide poetry contest in which submissions are made by residents of each of the city's 11 districts. The winning submissions will be read at the new Mission Bay Branch Library in August.

The District 8 contest, which includes Noe Valley, takes place this January. The district reading will be held at the Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Branch Library at 1 José Sarria Court near 16th and Market streets at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23. Presenting poets will be selected by Hirschman, and all poets whose work is chosen will receive \$50 for their readings. Submit work by e-mail at poets11@friendssfpl.org by Jan. 1.

For more information on the contest, log on to www.friendssfpl.org or visit the Eureka Valley Branch Library.

If This House Could Talk

What do your neighbors think about Noe Valley? From now through February, Neighborhood Public Radio will provide a fun opportunity to find out. The organization is collaborating with San Francisco and Oakland residents to produce an experimental reality radio game called *Talking Homes: Bringing Down the Neighborhood*. Led by NPR member Jon Brumit, the game attempts to reveal hidden stories by using the technology of a commercial real estate device called the "talking property" transmitter.

Participants use the transmitter to record stories and thoughts about their homes and neighbors, and to compete for prizes such as Worst Neighbor. Listeners, meanwhile, compete for other prizes by trying to guess the exact location of the transmitters. Noe Valleyans can listen by bringing a radio over to 23rd Street between Noe and Castro streets and tuning in to 96.9 FM. The audio is broadcast on a continual loop from the home of one of the participants. You can find out more and download a map of Talking Homes at soex.org. Otherwise, call 510-593-8271.

Help Bethany Help Others

Bethany United Methodist Church, at the corner of Sanchez and Clipper streets, is helping to feed and shelter people this December, and volunteers are needed. The church is adopting families from the local women's shelter La Casa de las Madres and is currently assembling a list of needed items.

Also, the church has volunteered to provide and serve meals for homeless people from Sunday, Dec. 31, through Tuesday, Jan. 2. On an ongoing basis, Sunday worship leaders are needed for duties including lay liturgist, scripture reader, children's time helper, greeter, and coffee hour host.

Bethany's Techniques to Wellness Program is designed to support grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. They need volunteers for homework help, computer training, activities, and games on Tuesdays from 3 to 5 p.m. To volunteer for any of these activities, call the church office at 647-8393 or e-mail hello@bethany.org.

Dan Hoyle Happens at the Marsh

Noe Valley resident Dan Hoyle will perform his latest work of journalistic theater at the Marsh San Francisco at 8 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from Dec. 14 through Jan. 13, 2007. *Tings Dey Happen* is the culmination of Hoyle's year as a Fulbright scholar studying oil politics in Nigeria. Today, the American government wants that country and its surrounding areas to produce more oil, but Nigerian militants are blowing up pipelines, warlords are threatening rebellion, and oil company workers are being kidnapped. Hoyle's play showcases these characters and more.

The Marsh is located at 1062 Valencia Street between 21st and 22nd streets. Tickets are \$15 to \$22 sliding scale. For more information, call 826-5750. To order tickets, call 800-838-3006 or visit www.themarsh.org.



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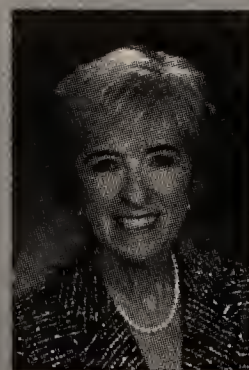
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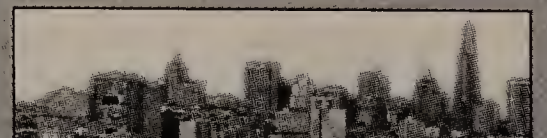
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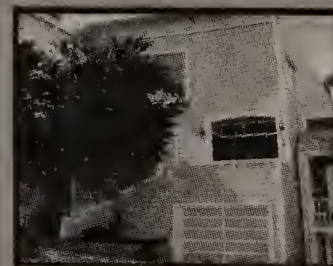
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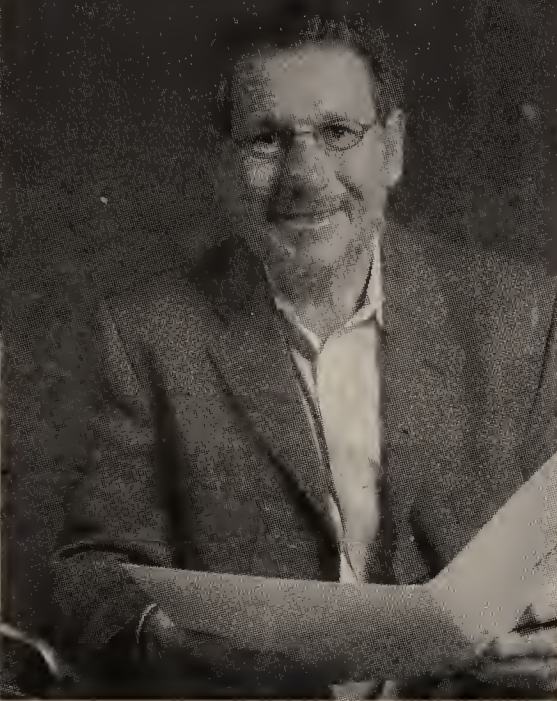
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STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular feature of the *Voice*, profiling new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, we introduce a children's clothing store next door to ForBeadin' on Church Street, and a mortgage and real estate brokerage on the corner of Clipper and Church streets.

LES PETITS NINOUS URBAN BÉBÉWEAR
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In late September, a chic little children's boutique, Les Petits Ninous Urban Bébéwear, opened in the postage-stamp-sized space vacated this summer by Rosa Goes Shopping, at Church and 24th streets. The proprietor of the new store, Fatima Moore, is a former Noe Valley resident and expectant mother.

"I know this community well, and I can remember stores that used to be here like Lit'l Lizards and Little Bean Sprouts," says Moore, 31, in her French-inflected accent. "They carried kids' clothes with an edge, and that's what interests me." (Lit'l Lizards continues to operate within Walkershaw Clothing on Castro Street.)

Like the other two shops, Les Petits Ninous features several local designers, such as San Francisco diaper-bag maven Susanne Maddux (her sophisticated bags sell for \$165); the Sunset District's Baby Leo, known for his cozy baby blankets (\$70); and popular California clothier Toni Tierney, whose non-frilly dresses go for about \$50. There are funky sock-shoes called Oh Five! (\$36), designed by a mom in Orinda and made in Brazil; Rockin' Baby slings (\$77) that have zippers rather than Velcro and come in an array of psychedelic prints; and Noppies (\$21 to \$35), soft cotton play clothes for newborns, made by a Dutch company that specializes in earth tones. "I'm trying to go beyond the standard blue and pink," Moore says of her inventory.

For older kids, up to age 10, there are cool rock-concert T-shirts from bands like AC/DC that have been re-sewn with cashmere sleeves (\$66). Parents who share the



Fatima Moore offers children's designer wear at her new boutique on Church Street, Les Petits Ninous. Photo by Pamela Gerord

tastes of Hollywood's Gwyneth Paltrow will find bath products by Noodle & Boo—lotions are \$14, baby wash is \$12, and diaper ointment \$17.50.

The tiny store doesn't feel overly crowded, even though Moore has no on-site storage (she keeps some inventory in her Sunset District home). She painted the walls a pale yellow, cleaned the dark hardwood floors, and added shelving from Ikea ("My best friend," she laughs) and furniture samples from Pottery Barn.

Moore, whose husband Corey helps her run the shop, was born in Casablanca, Morocco, grew up in Paris, France, and came to the United States 10 years ago. She graduated from the University of San Francisco with a business degree while working as a "family assistant" for a Pacific Heights family. That job, which she still holds part-time, entails caring for the family's three kids, teaching them French, and helping out with organizational tasks.

The shop's name comes from a nickname her charges call her. "It translates to 'little cutie,'" she explains. Moore's own little *ninou* is due to arrive in mid-April. She's not sure if she'll want to find out if it's a girl or a boy in advance, although she'll certainly have plenty of *bébé* clothes to choose from.

Les Petits Ninous is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.

—Olivia Boler

MC GUIRE REAL ESTATE
100 Clipper Street at Church Street
415-642-8000
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Whether the overall housing market is heating up or cooling down, Noe Valley will always be desirable to Donald Woolhouse, broker associate at McGuire Real Estate's newest office.

Located in the storefront formerly occupied by Noe Valley Computers at the corner of Clipper and Church streets, the brokerage opened for business Oct. 2. Woolhouse, who has been in the real estate profession for over 35 years but just joined McGuire to head up the new office, is thrilled both with the company and its location. He lives at 20th and Church streets. "I spend most of my time in the area and look forward to more involvement in our community," he says, noting that his new workplace "was a speakeasy for the community at one point; hence, the benches and storage area in the front."

Woolhouse and his staff, which includes agents Jito Garcia and Erin McCoin, say visitors will be comfortable in their light, airy space with its creamy yellow walls. They themselves enjoy gazing through their ample office windows at the eager patrons lining up at Lovejoy's Tea Room and the assortment of strollers and dog walkers who come and go on Church Street. "There is a lot of excitement in the area," Woolhouse says. "The business owners on Church Street are setting up to get resources in the area to keep businesses more organized and support the neighborhood."

Established in 1919, McGuire is a mid-

sized, regional "boutique" firm that is both a real estate and mortgage brokerage. While it specializes in luxury real estate, the company emphasizes that it is successful because it applies the same standards of excellence to properties in all price ranges and for clients with small or large budgets.

As for whether this is an opportune time to open a new real estate office, Alex McJunkin, McGuire's director of marketing, says, "Today's market gives buyers and sellers a more equal opportunity to negotiate, providing a lot of opportunity for buyers who have been waiting on the sidelines to finally step into the game. Buyers now have a chance to take their time to make decisions.... It is also a great time to trade up, as you are buying in a more static market rather than a pressure cooker of increasing values."

McJunkin adds that Noe Valley is a highly desirable neighborhood with a unique character and fairly fixed number of homes, which means the "demand is high, while the supply is very restricted. Noe Valley is also about community, and McGuire is all about the communities of San Francisco."

Woolhouse points out that McGuire's size brings advantages to customers. "We bring in buyers from all over the Bay Area, and our larger network of other companies gives us the national experience of knowledge and marketing to our clients."

The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on weekends from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

—Laura McHale Holland

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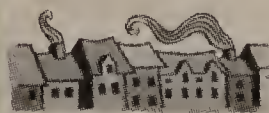
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JeffreyBanks@srealproperty.com



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Feels like being on top of the world in this spacious Edwardian full floor flat. Top floor flat in 2-Unit Edwardian Building (3rd Unit is Secluded Cottage on Rear of Property). Also includes large attic space!

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This Noe Valley Edwardian view home exudes the comforts of modern day living. Renovated from the foundation up, this 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath 3 level home is spacious and comfortable.

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Lisa Camozzi



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Single family beauty in the heart of Eureka Valley. This home has 3 bedrooms and two baths on the top level and living room with a formal dining room, kitchen and 1/2 bath on main level. Plenty of storage and a 1 car garage.

Al Rodriguez **415.338.0215**

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December 2006 / January 2007

Dec. 1-2: Mission Cultural Center holds a holiday BAZAAR. 11 am-4 pm. 2868 Mission. 643-5001; www.missionculturalcenter.org.

Dec. 1-Jan. 5: The Main Library displays an exhibit of memorabilia honoring the 1920s actress LOUISE BROOKS. 100 Larkin St. 557-4400; www.pandorasbox.com.

Dec. 1-Jan. 31: The S.F. Library's BOOK-MOBILE is at 665 Elizabeth St. Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30 am to 1 pm. 557-4353.

Dec. 1-Jan. 31: NOE STROLLS' stroller brigade departs Holey Bagel on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11 am. 3872 24th St. www.noestrolls.com.

Dec. 1-Jan. 31: The Noe Valley SENIOR CENTER serves hot lunches for people over 60, weekdays at 12:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 648-1030.

Dec. 2: Docent Julia Geist gives a lecture, "Opening Doors: RUTH ASAWA and Bay Area Women Artists, 1950-2000." 1-2 pm. The de Young Museum's Koret Auditorium, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, Golden Gate Park. 750-3638. www.thinker.org.

Dec. 2: The San Francisco SILENT FILM FESTIVAL screens the 1927 version of *Chicago*, the jazz-era tale on which the Broadway musical was based. 7:30 pm. The Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St. 621-6120.

Dec. 2 & 3: Suzanne Wetenhoeler performs original COMEDY at Brava Theater. Sat., 8 pm, Sun., 3 pm. 2789 24th St. 647-2822; www.brava.org.

Dec. 2, 16, 23 & 30: Children of all ages are invited to STORY TIME in Spanish followed by a craft workshop. Noon. Mission Library, 300 Bartlett St. 557-4277; www.spl.org.

Dec. 2-31: Casey Logan exhibits SOUND SCULPTURES and photography in "I Believe in the Power of the Absurd." Reception Dec. 2, 6-9 pm. Little Tree Gallery, 3412 22nd St. 643-4929; www.littletreegallery.com.

Dec. 3: Adoptable dogs from Rocket Dog Rescue will be in front of Zephyr Real Estate from noon to 4 pm. 4040 24th St. 642-4786.

Dec. 3: The San Francisco Girls Chorus performs a HOLIDAY CONCERT featuring traditional and contemporary carols. 4 pm. Noe Valley Chamber Music at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 800-838-3006; www.nvcm.org.

Dec. 4: SANDOR ELLIX KATZ discusses grassroots activists taking on "Big Food" in his new book, *The Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved*. 7:30 pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St. 282-9246.

Dec. 5: A Wish for the World's holiday TREE LIGHTING with Mayor Newsom benefits the Rainbow Fund. 5-6 pm; party until 8 pm. City Hall Rotunda. www.rainbowfund.org.

Dec. 5: FILM WRITER Felice Picano discusses his craft. 7 pm. Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Library, 3555 16th St. 355-5616.

Dec. 5: Noe Valley soprano Melody Moore is among the 2006 Adler Fellows performing OPERA scenes and arias at the War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Ave. 8 pm. 864-3330; www.sfoopera.com.

Dec. 5, 12 & 19 and Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30: Noe Valley Library sponsors LAPSITS at 10:15 am, and preschool STORY TIME at 11 am. Bethany United Methodist Church, 1268 Sanchez St. 647-8393.

Dec. 5, 12, 19 & 26: Share songs and stories at an INFANT/TODDLER LAPSIT at 10:30 am and the afternoon STORY TIME for preschoolers at 3:30 pm on Dec. 5, 12 & 26. Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Library, 3555 16th St. 355-5616; www.spl.org.

Dec. 7: Bring the whole family to the annual Café by the Bay CHANUKAH PARTY. Noon-2 pm. Jewish Family and Children's Services, Olive Room, 2150 Post St. 449-3843.

Dec. 7: The Hotel des Arts hosts an exhibit by WOMEN ARTISTS, to benefit La Casa de las Madres. 6:30-9 pm. Hotel des Arts, 447 Bush St. 956-3232; www.sfhoteledesarts.com.

Dec. 7, 14, 21 & 28: The Mission Library offers preschool story time at 10:10 am and a bilingual LAPSIT for babies at 11 am. Mission Library, 300 Bartlett St. 557-4277.

Dec. 8: Susan Kelk Cervantes, founder of PRECITA EYES Muralists, exhibits original paintings and drawings. Opening reception 7-10 pm. Precita Eyes Mural Center, 2981 24th St. 285-2287; www.precitaeyes.org.

Dec. 8: Embaraka Records and DJ Sep present "Sonik Souk: A Night of Pan-ARABIC RHYTHMS," featuring MC Rai, Jef Stott, and the Embarka Sound System. 10 pm-2 am. The Elbo Room, 647 Valencia St. 552-7788.



"Globe with Speakers" by Casey Logan will be on display at Little Tree Gallery Dec. 2-31.

Dec. 9: Make beeswax candles, scented soaps, and candy houses at HOLIDAY CRAFTS DAY at the Randall Museum. 10 am-3 pm. 199 Museum Way. 554-9600; www.randallmuseum.org.

Dec. 9: Bring the camera and the kids with their wish lists to MEET SANTA and Rudolph as they prance in to Noe Valley. 11 am-2 pm. Zephyr Real Estate, 4040 24th St.

Dec. 9: Enjoy carolers, hot cider, cookies, and a holiday raffle, and meet Santa and Mrs. Claus at the second annual NOEL STROLL sponsored by the Noe Valley Merchants, on 24th Street between Castro & Church, 5-9 pm.

Dec. 9, 10, 16, 17, 19-24 & 26-30: David Hirata & Friends performs a MAGIC SHOW for all ages. 2 pm. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia St. 826-5750.

Dec. 10: Noe Valley Ministry hosts Sunday evening MEDITATIONS featuring a video of David Sperovia's enlightenment gatherings. 7 pm. 1021 Sanchez St. 821-2090; www.rabar@mindspring.com.

Dec. 11: The Odd Mondays series offers a POST-ELECTION review, with Gerald Heather, SFSU political science professor emeritus, at 7 pm. No-host dinner at Noe Valley Pizza, 24th & Sanchez, 5:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 821-2090 or e-mail for reservations: jlsender@webtv.net.

Dec. 12: The Noe Valley Association hosts a PUBLIC FORUM to examine long-range plans for Noe Valley's commercial corridor. 7:30 pm. St. Philip's Church Meeting Hall, 725 Diamond St. 282-9918.

Dec. 14-Jan. 27: The Marsh presents DAN HOYLE's "Tings Oey Happen," a one-man play about Nigerian oil politics. Dec. 14-Jan. 6: Thurs., Fri., Sat., 8 pm; Jan. 11-27: Thurs., Fri., 8 pm; Sat., 5 pm. 1062 Valencia St. 800-838-3006; www.themarsh.org.

Dec. 15: KITKA Women's Vocal Ensemble gives a holiday CONCERT of Slavic, Eastern Orthodox, and Hebrew carols. 8:15-10:15 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Dec. 15 & 16: Four choral ensembles from S.F. State University perform a candlelight CHRISTMAS CONCERT. 8 pm. Most Holy Redeemer Church, 100 Diamond St. 863-6259.

Dec. 15-24: Smuin Ballet presents "The CHRISTMAS BALLET, 2006 Edition." Wed.-Fri., 8 pm; Sat., 2 pm & 8 pm, Sun., 2 pm. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 700 Howard St. 495-2234; www.smuinballet.org.

Dec. 16: The group San Francisco Amateur Astronomers offers a night of STARGAZING. 5:30-10 pm. Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way. 554-9600; www.randallmuseum.org.

Dec. 17: Kids 9 to 14 design, build, and program robots for the LEGO LEAGUE robotics qualifying tournament. 9:45 am-4:30 pm. Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way. 554-9600; www.randallmuseum.org.

Dec. 18: MARGO PERIN reads from her memoir-in-progress, *Criminal Intent*, based on her teaching experiences in the San Francisco County Jail. 7 pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St. 282-9246.

Dec. 18-Jan. 28: The de Young Museum displays a retrospective of artist RUTH ASAWA's work, "Contours in the Air." Golden Gate Park. 863-3330; www.thinker.org.

Dec. 19: SING ALONG with Gayle Schmitt and her guitar. 3:30 pm. Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Library, 3555 16th St. 355-1616.

Dec. 19: MUSAIC men's acapella ensemble performs traditional carols in "This Shining Night." 8 pm. St. Matthew's Church, 3281 16th St. 863-6371; www.stmatthews-sf.org.

Dec. 19 & Jan. 16: Calling all artists, teachers, and mural admirers to the community MURAL ARTS WORKSHOP. 7-9 pm. Precita Eyes, 2981 24th St. 285-2287; www.precitaeyes.org.

Jan. 6: Noe Valley Music series presents Grammy-winning folk legend RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT. 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Jan. 9: BOSWICK THE CLOWN and his Reading Circus perform at 3:30 pm. Eureka Valley Library. 3555 16th St. 355-1616.

Jan. 12: British guitarist ADRIAN LEGG plays at 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Jan. 28: Noe Valley CHAMBER MUSIC presents a concert of duos for cello and piano, plus Oavid Carlson's "Quantum Quartet." 4 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 800-838-3006; www.nvcm.org.

SEE YOU IN 2007

The next *Noe Valley Voice* will be the February issue, distributed in Noe Valley Feb. 3. We'll start collecting calendar items the first week of January (deadline **Jan. 15**). E-mail calendar@noevalleyvoice.com or send items to *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Noe Valley events take priority, but we'll try to squeeze in as many other items as possible.



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Contact: Linton Stables, 541-0344, ext. 230
E-mail: capa@home4us.org
Meetings: Second Thursday of the month, Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Church Street Business (CSB)

Contacts: Lynn Ingham, 643-5966, or Paula Benton, 248-0235
E-mail: bentonp@sprynet.com
Meetings: Third Monday, every other month. Location varies. Sept. 18 meeting at Fattoush, 1361 Church St., 6:30 p.m.

Diamond Heights Community Association

Contact: Betsy Eddy, 239-5776
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31529, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: First Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m. Call for location.

Dolores Heights Improvement Club

Contact: Amy Powell, 647-4228
Mailing Address: 3732 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Board meetings bimonthly; membership semi-annually. Call for details.

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)

Contacts: Pat Lockhart, 282-9360; Diane McCarney, 824-0303; or Deanna Mooney, 821-4045
Mailing Address: 560 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club

Contact: Paul Kantus, 647-3753
Mailing Address: 492 Douglass St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Irregular, call to confirm.

Eureka Valley Promotion Association

Contact: Lion Barnett, 255-3624
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Third Thursday of the month (except December), Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Fair Oaks Neighbors

Contact: Joyce Kurtz, 401-6362

MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Mailing Address: 261 Fair Oaks St., San Francisco, CA 94110

Meetings: Call for information. The annual Fair Oaks Street Fair is always held the day before Mother's Day.

Friends of Dolores Park Playground

Contact: Eli Merritt, 415-285-3774
E-mail: emerr@earthlink.net
Mailing Address: 3786 20th St., San Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: E-mail for information on advocacy meetings and social events for kids

Friends of Glen Canyon Park

Contact: Richard Craib, 648-0862
Mailing Address: 140 Turquoise Way, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

Friends of Noe Courts Playground

Contact: Laura Norman
E-mail: lauranor@yahoo.com
Mailing Address: c/o Friends of Noe Valley, P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: E-mail for dates and times.

Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)

Contact: Richard May
E-mail: rambooks@pacbell.net
Web site: www.friendsofnoevalley.com
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: First or second Thursday of the month (call or e-mail to confirm), at St. Philip's Parish Hall, 725 Diamond St.

Friends of On Lok's 30th Street Senior Center

Contact: Marianne Hampton, 601-7845
Mailing Address: 225 30th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Occasional. Call for details.

Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

Contact: Christina Goebel, 826-7772
E-mail: christina_goebel@yahoo.com
Meetings: Call or e-mail for dates and times.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

Contact: John Barbey, 695-0990
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 192114, San Francisco, CA 94119
Meetings: Quarterly. Call for details.

Noe Strolls "Playgroup on Wheels"

Contact: noestrolls@aol.com
Weekly Strolls: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11 a.m., departing Holey Bagel, 3872 24th St., between Sanchez and Vicksburg. Stroll tours Noe Valley, the Castro, and the Mission. Membership free. To join, and for more details, visit www.noestrolls.com.

Noe Valley Association-Community Benefit District

Contact: Debra Niemann, nemo@rcn.com
Dispatch: To report spills, debris, or garbage on 24th Street, call 559-8492.

Noe Valley Democratic Club

Contact: Andy Fleischman, 641-5838
Meetings: Third Wednesday of the month; Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., 7:30 p.m.

Noe Valley Farmers' Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m. to noon, on 24th between Sanchez and Vicksburg Street
Contact: Paula Benton, 248-1332
Mailing Address: 4104 24th St., #401, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Second Thursday of the month, Noe Valley Ministry (co-sponsor), 1021 Sanchez St., 6 p.m.

Noe Valley Library Campaign

Contacts: Kim Drew, 643-4695, kkdrew@yahoo.com; Marian Chatfield-Taylor, 626-7512, ext. 103
Mailing Address: Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, 391 Grove St., San Francisco, CA 94102
Meetings: Call for information.

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA)

Contacts: Diane Barrett, 647-2116, or Teresa Gay, 336-6304
E-mail: info@noevalleymerchants.com; register at www.noevalleymerchants.com.
Meetings: Last Wednesday of the month. E-mail for location and time.

Noe Valley Parent Network

An e-mail resource network for parents
Contact: Mina Kenvin
E-mail: minaken@gmail.com

Noe Valley Preparedness Committee

Contact: Mindy Kershner, 377-3890
E-mail: mindytower@aol.com
Meetings: Call for details.

Outer Noe Valley Merchants

Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500
Mailing Address: 294 29th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

San Jose/Guerrero Coalition to Save Our Streets

Contact: Don Oshiro, 285-8188
E-mail: contact@sanjoseguerrero.com
Web site: www.sanjoseguerrero.com
Meetings: See web site.

See Jane Run Running/Walking Club

Contact: Lori Shannon, 401-8338
Mailing Address: 3870 24th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Sundays, 10 a.m. (Runners meet at See Jane Run to pick up the 5K run/walk route. Info? www.SeeJaneRunSports.com.)

Southwest Mission Neighborhood Association (SWMNA)

Boundaries: 24th Street to Cesar Chavez and Fair Oaks to Mission
Contact: Lori Oshiro, Secretary
E-mail: lori@tail-wagging.com
Web site: www.tail-wagging.com
Meetings: E-mail for information.

Upper Noe Neighbors

Contact: Vicki Rosen, 285-0473
Mailing Address: 169 Valley St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Last Thursday of the month (call to confirm), 30th Street Senior Center, 225 30th St., 7:30 p.m.

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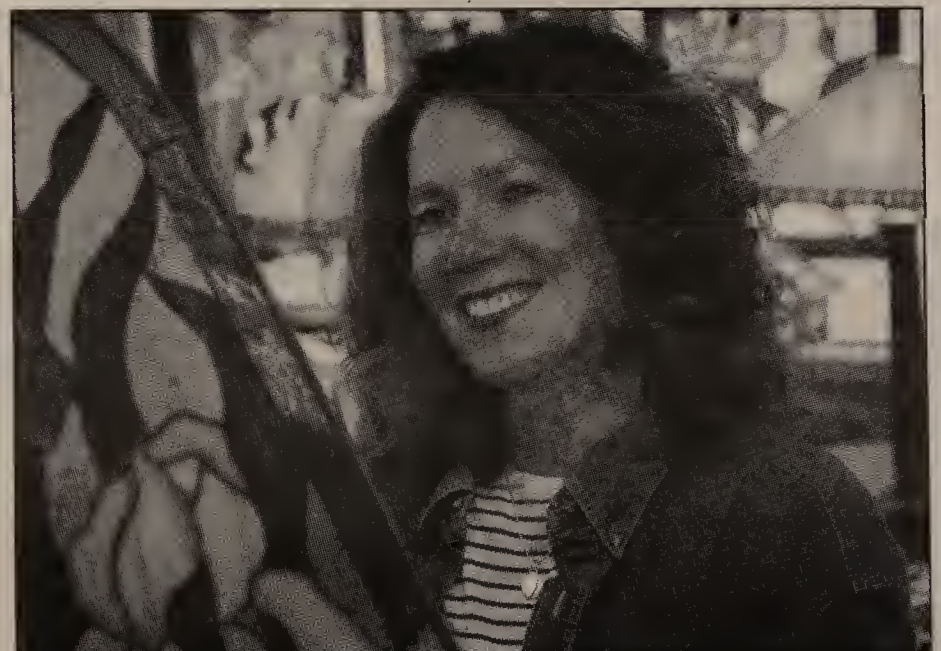
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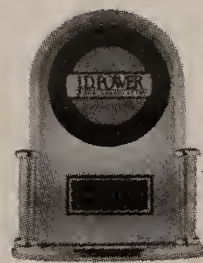
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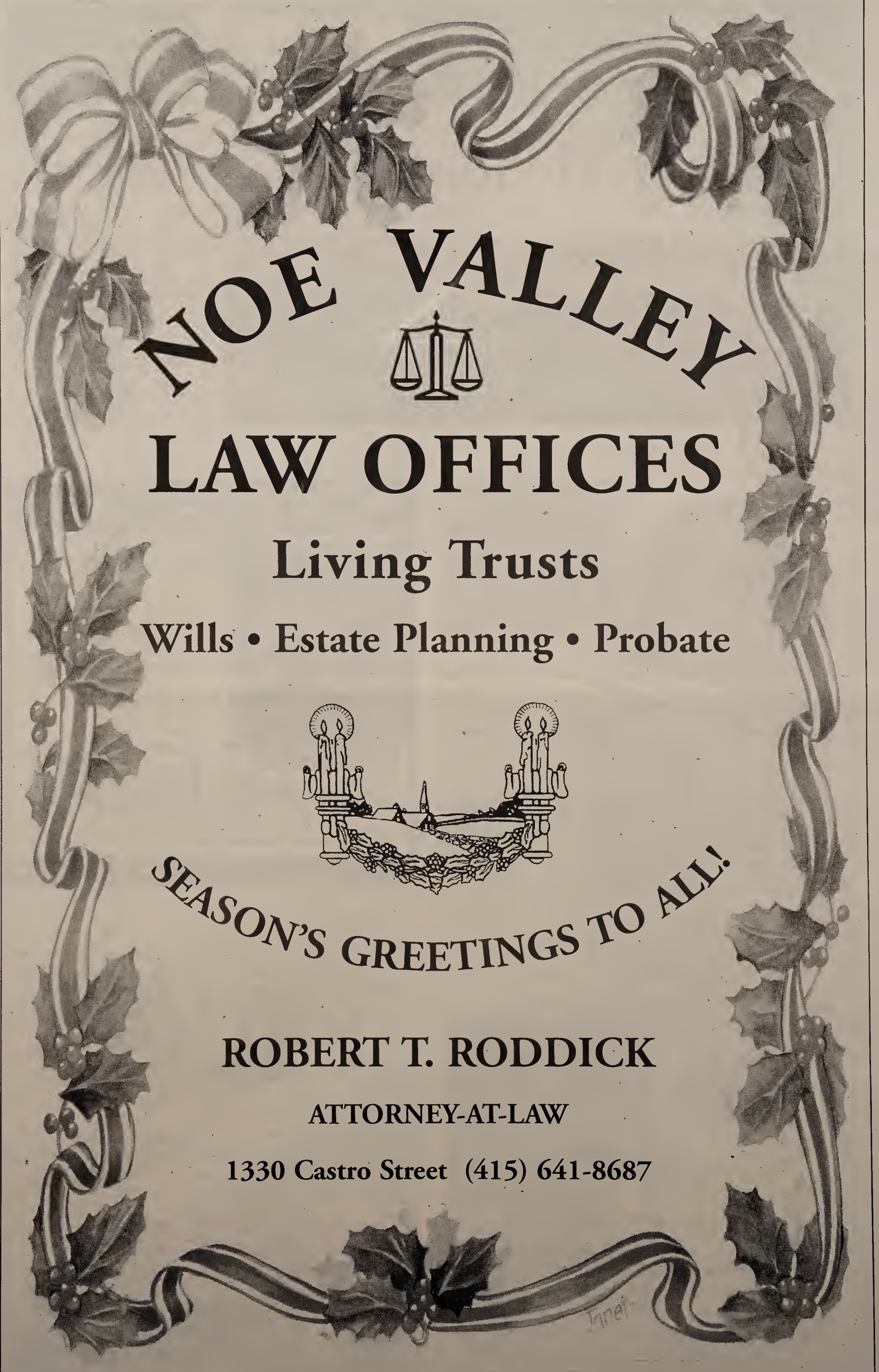
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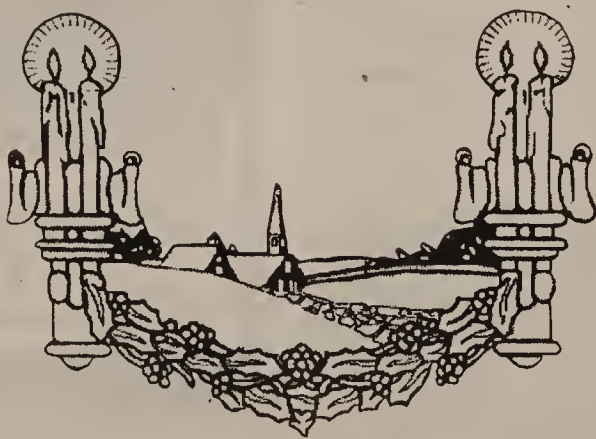
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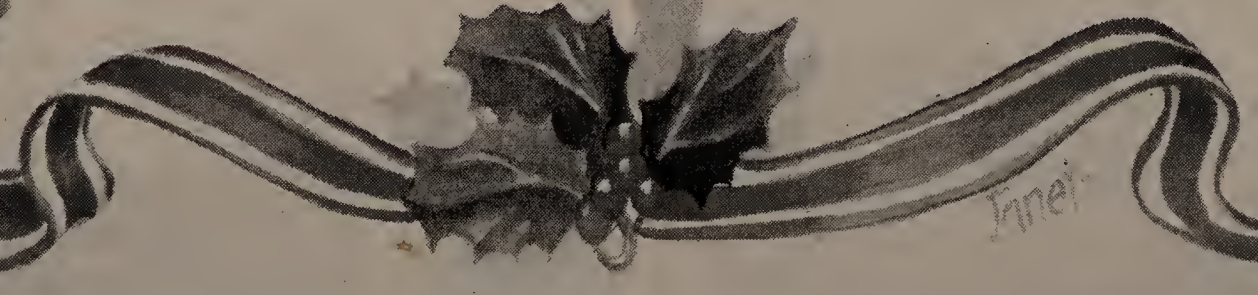


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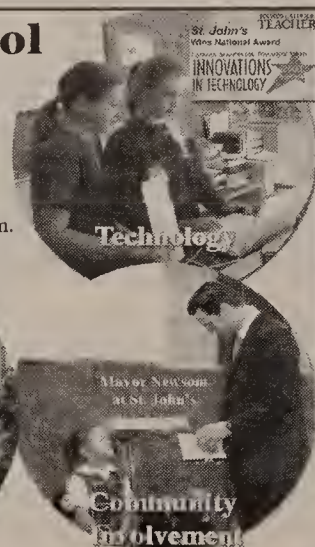
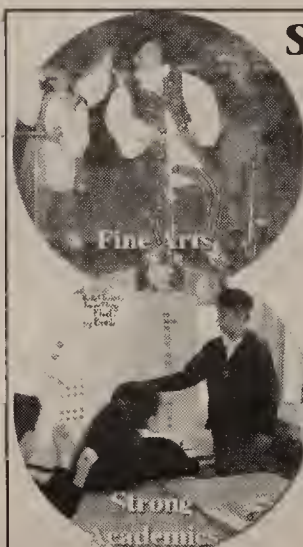


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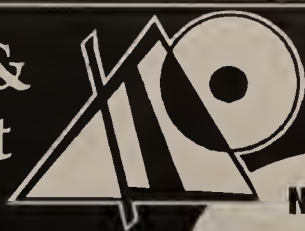
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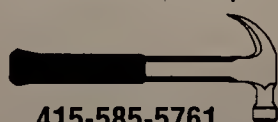
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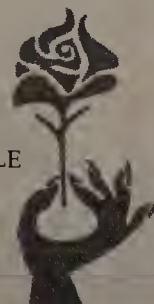
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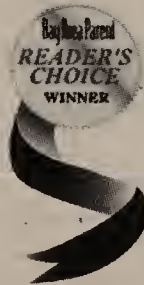
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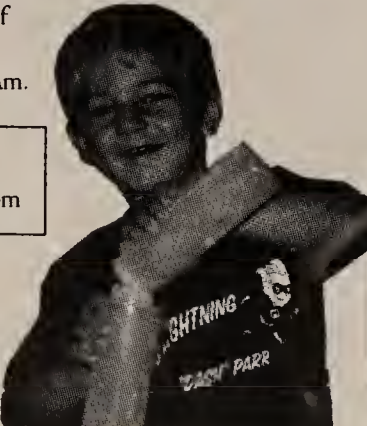
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Fair Faces Forward. Sisters Mirna (left) and Kristen (right) join pal Natalie with a crash test baby at the conclusion of the stroller derby at Noe Valley's Harvest Festival on 24th Street in October.

Photo by Pamela Gerard



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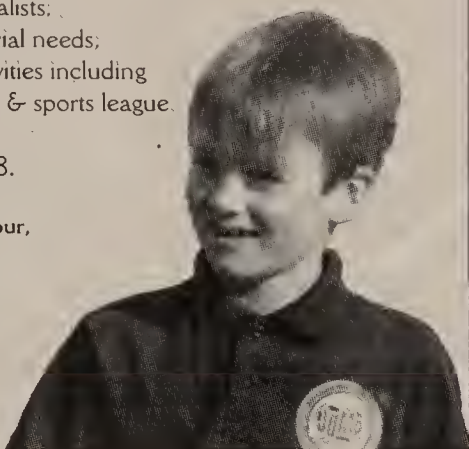
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SCHOOL REPORT

Here's the scoop from volunteers at James Lick Middle School and Alvarado Elementary. Next issue, we'll hear from Fairmount School as well.

JAMES LICK

Winter Wonderland Ball

Snowflakes will be dancing to a hip-hop beat when our students dress up for a semi-formal dinner dance Friday evening, Dec. 8. The art class is providing the special snowflake décor, and adult volunteers will prepare and serve the festive meal. Food will be served at 5 p.m., followed by dancing from 6 to 8 p.m. A \$10 donation covers both food and music, with proceeds benefiting the school's 75th-anniversary yearbook. Yearbook adviser Tobi Hacker is coordinating the dressy event.

Benefit for Yucatan Trip

Grownups will be able to enjoy their own dance party at El Rio on Saturday, Jan. 27, from 5 to 9 p.m. Miguel Govea and his popular band, *Los Compas*, will provide the music. Proceeds will benefit the students' field trip to Yucatan, Mexico, in February. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. We will also sell plates of rice, beans, salad, and chicken for \$5.

Leveling the Playing Field

Nurses from UCSF Medical School were on campus four days in November to provide free physical examinations for students planning to play on our soccer, volleyball, and track teams. Additional free health screenings will include scoliosis screening on Jan. 11, hearing tests on Jan. 23, and vision exams on March 16. These screenings are especially valuable for students who would not other-

wise have access to medical services.

It's Bee Season!

Our language arts teachers have been busy holding in-class spelling contests, as well as helping students learn common roots and affixes, in preparation for competition in a schoolwide spelling bee on Tuesday, Dec. 12. James Lick's top speller will advance to the next level of the 2007 Scripps National Spelling Bee. The competition was founded in 1935 to foster language understanding and to improve spelling, vocabulary, and word usage.

Science Fair Gives Moms the Edge

Why is it that moms always remember things that kids want to forget? Last year, one of our students compared the memories of boys and girls his age with those of middle-aged women. His award-winning experiment used a sophisticated statistical analysis to reveal that moms really do have better memories than their children. Another student compared the effectiveness of popular hair products, supporting his conclusions with photographs of himself wearing various sprays and gels.

You can see literally hundreds of amazing new student experiments in our gym on Wednesday, Jan. 10, beginning at 6 p.m. The best entries will advance to citywide competition at the Randall Museum in February. Come see why this is such a popular event!

Holiday Showcase: A holiday showcase of talent on Thursday, Dec. 14, will feature performances by our school's new rock bands at 6:30 p.m. in our lovely auditorium. Suggested donation is only \$3!

Chats with the Principal: This month's chat with Principal Carmelo Sgarlato happens at a special time: Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 5 p.m. Regular monthly chats at 8:30 a.m. on the third Friday of the month resume on Jan. 19, 2007.

Wish List: The Bulldog Cafe needs a stainless-steel percolator-type coffeemaker...the bigger, the better. If you have a spare one hiding in your basement or storage closet, please contact the school and leave a message for par-

ent liaison Leonor Jackson or café coordinator Jewli Judd.

Final Tours: Our last school tours for prospective families will be on Thursdays, Dec. 7 and 14, from 9 to 10 a.m. No reservations are necessary.

New Web Address: As we go to press, the school's primary web address is moving to the James Lick PTSA web site: www.jameslickpta.org.

—Sue Cattoche

ALVARADO

Festive Winter Fair

One of the PTA's largest and most popular events is just around the corner! Get ready for the Alvarado Winter Fair on Tuesday, Dec. 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Alvarado school cafeteria. Families and staff all pitch in and bring a favorite dish, to create a magnificent feast featuring foods from around the world. The students perform and sing on stage for entertainment. Seasonal arts and crafts are provided for children and their parents.

Learn how to make paper cranes, bead icicles and snowflakes, adorn wreaths, and create unique garlands. Shop at the PTA Holiday Marketplace! The marketplace features art and jewelry designed by some of Alvarado's talented teachers, various homemade gifts created by PTA families, Alvarado T-shirts and sweatshirts, a Spanish book fair, and note cards designed by the students. Proceeds from the sale of these items will fund the Winter Fair event and support other PTA programs. Mark your calendars!

School Is Clean and Green

On Saturday, Nov. 4, Alvarado was a busy place as nearly 100 volunteers descended upon the school for its annual workday. Despite all the extracurricular activities that occur on the weekends in the fall, the school had a fantastic turnout.

The halls and classrooms are now clean and organized. Teachers have new shelves, computer desks, and pulley systems. Furniture and

walls have fresh paint, rugs are cleaner, and there are new planters in the upper yard containing cheerful young plants ready to thrive, just like our children.

Thanks to the parent and community volunteers and donors, who make this annual event one of the most rewarding of the school year, the children's learning environment has truly improved. A special thank you to the following local businesses for their generous donations: Action Rentals, Aidells Sausage Company, Andiamo Deli, Beronio Lumber, Café Ponte, La Victoria Panaderia and Bakery, Noe Valley Bakery, Martha and Brothers Coffee Company, and Happy Boy Farms at the Noe Valley Farmers' Market. Please show them some appreciation for their support of the neighborhood's public schools.

Tuesday Tours

Interested in visiting Alvarado Elementary School? School tours are currently offered every Tuesday morning beginning at 8:30 a.m. Please call the school office to schedule an appointment.

—Dan Willhite

SCHOOL CONTACTS

Alvarado Elementary School
Gene Barresi, Principal
625 Douglass Street at Alvarado
415-695-5695
www.alvaradoschool.net

Fairmount Elementary School
Karling Aguilera-Fort, Principal
65 Chenery Street at Randall
415-695-5669
www.fairmountschoolpta.org

James Lick Middle School
Carmelo Sgarlato, Principal
1220 Noe Street at 25th Street
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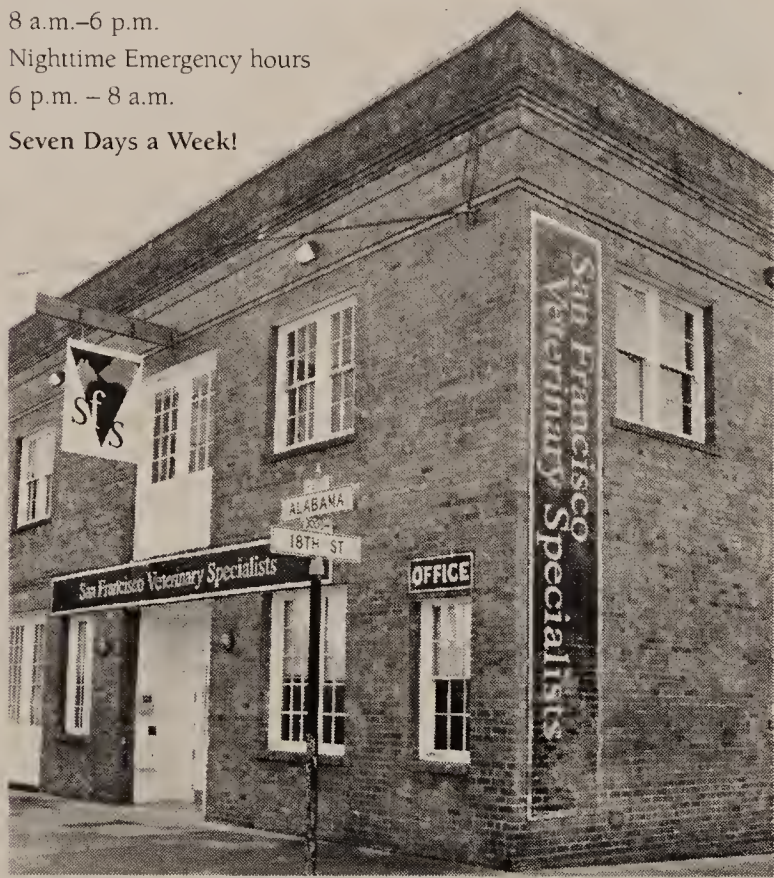
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MORE BOOKS TO READ

This month's library picks include an anthology of nonfiction prose by Joan Didion and a CD of songs inspired by the stories of Laura Ingalls Wilder. If you want to check out either work's availability, get three to a nearby branch or visit the San Francisco Library online at www.sfpl.org. In addition to books, the library has magazines, CDs, DVDs, videos, and audiocassettes. Note: The Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library at 451 Jersey Street remains closed for seismic renovation until late 2007. For information, call 557-4353.

LIBRARY SELECTIONS

Children's Fiction

■ Little Bear takes some tentative first steps toward independence when he sets up house in a small cave of his own, but it's nice to have Big Bear nearby, in Martin Waddell's *Sleep Tight, Little Bear*, illustrated by Barbara Firth. *Ages 3 to 5.*

■ Does rainy weather get you down? You'll appreciate why Molly eventually exclaims, "I Love the Rain," in the picture story by Margaret Park Bridges, matched with watercolor and ink illustrations by Christine Davenier. *Ages 4 to 7.*

■ Mooch the cat decides that the perfect present for his best friend, Earl the dog, is *The Gift of Nothing*, Patrick McDonnell's thoughtful offering. *Ages 6 to 9.*

■ Laugh with, and at, *Goha the Wise Fool*, in 15 short tales featuring this Middle Eastern folk character, retold by Denys Johnson-Davies. The amusing and insightful incidents are illustrated in hand-sewn *khiyamiyas* (appliqués) created by Egyptian artists Hany El Saed Ahmed from drawings by Hag Hamdy Mohamed Fattouh. *Ages 6 to 9.*

Children's Non-Fiction

■ In *A Mother's Journey*, Sandra Markle tells how a mother emperor penguin must make a winter journey to find food to bring back to her newborn chick. Alan Marks' watercolors portray the harsh, cold beauty of the Antarctic. *Ages 5 to 8.*

Music Recording

■ *Happy Land: Musical Tributes to Laura Ingalls Wilder* is a CD of modern musicians and singers performing a selection of 18 old-time tunes, popular songs, and hymns mentioned by Wilder in her books about her family's life on the 19th-century American frontier. Lyrics included. *Ages 5 and older.*

—Children's annotations by Pam Ow, Children's Librarian at the Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Memorial Branch

Adult Fiction

■ A biologist, a sniper, and a giraffe named Snehurka are among the narrators describing the East African capture, sea voyage to a Czechoslovakian zoo, and massacre of 49 "cameleopards" in *Giraffe*, a first novel by *Economist* writer J. M. Ledgard.

■ *The Ladies of Grace Adieu*, eight stories by Susanna Clarke, author of the 2004 best-seller *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*, revisits the English countryside of 1811 and characters who tangle with fantasy and magic.

Adult Non-Fiction

■ Holiday cooking ideas abound in two cookbooks: *Classic Rachael Ray 30-Minute Meals*, which has 150 of the television star's favorite dishes; and *Morgan Freeman & Friends: Caribbean Cooking for a Cause*, exotic island recipes compiled to benefit Grenada's hurricane devastation.

■ In *Chas Addams: A Cartoonist's Life*, Linda H. Davis reveals the amazing talent, ghoulish humor, and impressive womanizing (Greta Garbo, Jackie Kennedy) of Charles Addams, the eccentric *New Yorker* cartoonist and creator of "The Addams Family."

■ Seven previously published nonfiction books by Joan Didion—*Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, *The White Album*, *Salvador*, *Miami*, *After Henry*, *Political Fictions*, and *Where I Was From*—are included in her new collection, *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*.

■ Journalist Michael Walker tells tales of Los Angeles' pop, rock, and folk musicians from the late 1960s and early 1970s, in *Laural Canyon: The Inside Story of Rock-and-Roll's Legendary Neighborhood*.

—Adult annotations by Karol Barske of the Noe Valley Voice staff

LIBRARY EVENTS

Sing Along with Gayle

■ Gayle Schmitt will offer a sing-along music program for children of all ages at the Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Branch on Tuesday, Dec. 19, at 3:30 p.m.

Lapsits, Story Time, and More

■ Come enjoy stories, songs, and fingerplays with your baby or toddler, at the Noe Valley Library's Tuesday *lapsits*, held at 10:15 a.m. on Dec. 5, 12 & 19, and Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30, at Bethany United Methodist Church, 1268 Sanchez Street (corner of Clipper). Bethany will also host *preschool story time*, a read-aloud program for kids ages 3 to 5, on the same dates but starting at 11 a.m.

■ During December and January, the Mission, Glen Park, Bernal Heights, and Eureka Valley branches also offer story times and lapsits, plus a variety of reading, art, music, and lecture programs. For a complete schedule of San Francisco Library events, go to www.sfpl.org.

■ The Noe Valley *Bookmobile* will be parked at 665 Elizabeth Street near Diamond Street on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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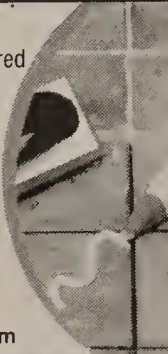
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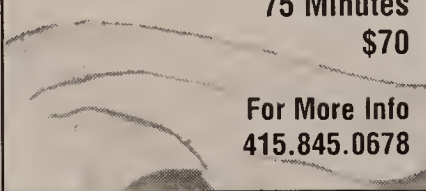



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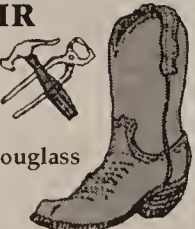
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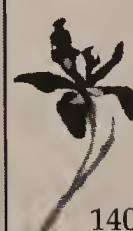
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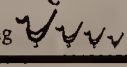
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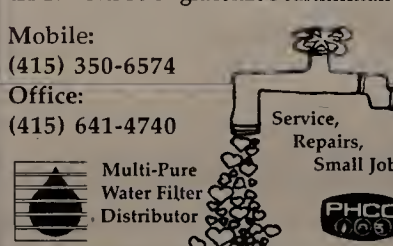
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The next *Voice* will be the February 2007 issue, distributed in Noe Valley on or before Feb. 2. **The deadline for Class Ads is Jan. 15, 2006.**

Note: The Class Ads are printed in the newspaper and then displayed for one month on our web site: www.noevalleyvoice.com. (The exception is this issue, which will be displayed for two months, December and January.)

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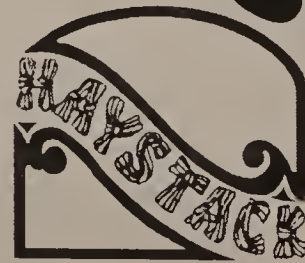
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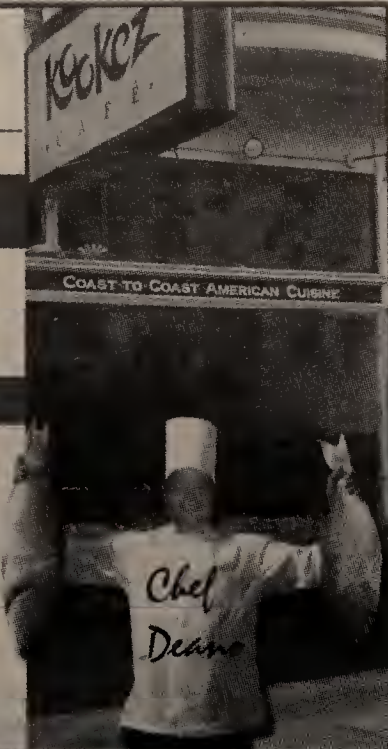
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and now for the RUMORS behind the news

Window Dressing

By Mazook

*'Twas the month before Christmas...
And all through the Valley
Not a creature was stirring except
Carol Yenne
The storefront at Real Food's had been such
a blight
Dear Carol was focused on making things
right.
So she called Sergio Diaz of the
Nutraceutical crowd
And suggested a décor to make us all proud.
What he would say was anybody's guess
But in the spirit of Christmas, the man
actually said "yes."*

"Isn't that great!" beams Carol Yenne, Small Frys proprietor and past president of the Noe Valley Merchants Association. "If you have a lemon, make lemonade: the Noe Valley Merchants are taking over Real Food and decorating it for the holidays!"

To dress up the empty storefront's facade with lights and greenery, Yenne has enlisted the help of Forbeadin' owner Donna Davis and Church Street resident Tom Mogensen, an art teacher at San Francisco School of the Arts (SOTA).

"We are just now putting this together," says Davis, "and it will have a winter wonderland theme. What we really need now are a lot of artificial Christmas trees!" Anyone who has a tree is encouraged to get in contact with Davis immediately. Her number is 641-1414, or leave

a message at Forbeadin', 1195 Church, right off 24th Street.



HOMIE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: Long-term plans for 24th Street beautification were the hot topic at a Noe Valley Association (Community Benefit District) meeting on Thursday, Nov. 16, in the community room at St. Philip's Church. NVA director Debra Niemann says there were great ideas spilling out of the 60 or so neighbors who came to discuss three potential "dreams" for the neighborhood's commercial strip.

The discussion about our local urban ecology will continue at a second community meeting, on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m. Again the location is the St. Philip's community room, which is accessible from 24th Street (and Diamond) through the parking lot, which also will be available for attendees.

The NVA has almost finished the remodel of the front of the city parking lot on 24th Street between the Le Zinc bistro and Radio Shack. Niemann says they are currently selecting appropriate furniture (a new bench, perhaps?) that will fit in the space between the sidewalk and the parking lot.

Another item on the agenda is a report by the neighborhood committee that is overseeing the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library renovation project. Two members, Bill Yenne and David Brodwin, took a hard-hat tour of the construction project on Nov. 17, and say that everything appears to be on schedule.

According to Yenne, at the time of their tour, the Department of Public Works reported that "over 194 days of the project's 425 allotted days have elapsed [that's 45.64 percent of the time], 31.6 percent of the money has been spent, and 42 percent of the project has been completed."

The library's retrofit has a "substantial completion" date of July 4, 2007, and a "final completion" date set for Sept. 2,

2007. So mark your calendars.



LET'S GET PHYSICAL: Neighborhood yearnings for toned bodies has resulted in a 900-square-foot expansion of Spring Pilates Studio, which opened at 1414 Castro Street three years ago.

"The additional room will help the studio meet the growing demand from the Noe Valley community," says studio co-owner Ky Carnell Russell, "enabling us to expand into new services, workshops, class schedules, and a selection of retail items."

In January, the studio will begin a new monthly workshop series on such topics as low back pain, healthy knees, and conditioning for specific sports. Co-owner Izabel Loinaz says the workshops are designed for people who want to learn about Pilates but may not be able to commit to weekly classes or sessions.

Curves, which has been open for two and a half years on the corner of Church and 29th Street, has a new owner, Bonnie Farrell. The woman-only fitness studio, part of a nationwide chain, is known for its 30-minute exercise circuit. Farrell says Curves has stretched its hours—now you can work out from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays, and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Farrell is also offering a two-week free introduction for new members.

We reported in October that GNC closed its doors in September, which it did. However, as you can see, there has been a "grand re-opening," with a refurbished, fully stocked store open for business. The corporation that operates the national chain of General Nutrition Center (GNC) stores has taken over the Noe Valley outlet, which had been operated by an independent franchisee for more than seven years. "The company bought back the franchise from the proprietor," according to store manager Brian Entler (who resides in Eureka Valley), "and GNC want-

ed to keep this location and provide the neighborhood with a full range of our products."

The doors reopened Oct. 16, and Entler apologizes to all the gold card members, "who will be entitled to an extra 20 percent discount on all items because of the eight weeks the store was closed." That's a lot of vitamins to make up.



SURREAL ESTATE: The market price index for Noe real estate saw an interesting range over the last couple of months. Sheila Ash put the former site of her Noe's Nest bed-and-breakfast up for sale after she spent two years remodeling it. The asking price for the single-family dwelling, located at 3973 23rd Street, was \$2.8 million, and it reportedly sold in less than 10 days last month. Nobody's talking yet, because escrow hasn't closed. FYI, Noe's Nest is open for business at 1257 Guerrero between 24th and 25th, its location for the past two years.

At the other end of the spectrum was the list price of \$316,167 for a three-bedroom condo at 1594 Dolores Street, the former site of Reilly's Funeral Home.

This unit was the one "low-income" unit promised by the developers of that 13-unit condo on the corner of Dolores and 29th streets, built roughly three years ago. The "affordable" condo was one of the concessions that were being made to neighbors when the project was winding its way through the permit process. It was designated as one of the Mayor's Office of Housing "below-market-rate" (BMR) units to be made "available at affordable prices to low- and moderate-income households." The eligibility guidelines allow first-time buyers to have incomes up to \$63,850 for one person, up to \$91,200 for a family of four. The buyer was picked by lottery on Nov. 22.

The winner of the unit should thank

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RUMORS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

his/her neighbors for the windfall. In October of 2004, the developers offered to pay \$200 million to the Housing Office, in exchange for removing the condo from the BMR list. The Upper Noe Neighbors and our supervisor, Bevan Dufty, opposed the deal and prevailed, despite pressure from the developers for two years. "Finally!" said Upper Noe Neighbors president Vicki Rosen when asked for a comment.

MY BRILLIANT CAREEN: Upper Noe Valley was the scene of a runaway bus just before 9 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 6, when an electric 24-Divisadero trolley rolled backwards down Noe Street between Valley and 29th. It wiped out eight motor vehicles and the side of an apartment house. Fortunately, no one was injured.

By all accounts, it appears that the northbound bus could not get around a garbage truck that was double-parked on the steep hill. The Muni driver tried to go around, but the bus stalled when the rabbit ears that connect the bus to the power line came off the track. Then the woman bus driver couldn't reconnect them. At this point, all the passengers were put on another bus. While the driver waited for help, she put a block behind the disabled bus' back wheel, but the block slipped, and gravity prevailed.

Muni says it was Sunset Scavenger's fault for not moving the truck, and Sunset Scavenger says it was Muni's fault. The pigeons are staying out of sight.

By the way, how many of you out there know the physical boundaries of "Upper Noe Valley"? Where does Upper Noe turn into Fairmount, or become Diamond Heights? E-mail me your answers:

mazook@noevalleyvoice.com.

FILM CLIP-CLOPS: *Lost in the Fog*, the eponymous documentary about our famous local racehorse and its owner, Harry J. Aleo, a Downtown Noe Valley realtor for the past 60 years, is in its final stages of production. The film will be appearing at the Sundance Film Festival, which runs from Jan. 18 to 28, 2007, in Park City, Utah.

This film is being produced by filmmaker John Corey, who has lived on Elizabeth Street for most of his 39 years. Corey was a producer for KPIX's *Evening Magazine* until last summer, when he decided to devote all his time to his independent production company, Doctored Pictures.

"We have finished the rough cut, which is about an hour and forty minutes," says Corey, "and we will be trying to get it down to a little over 90 minutes for Sundance, so I have a busy month ahead of me."

Corey started working on the film in February 2005, when *Lost in the Fog* was setting speed records with Russell Baze in the saddle. By summer of that year the Fog had become a national sprint star.

"I think Harry and I got along so well because we both were born and raised in this neighborhood and felt a kindred spirit, so I was able to follow the horse around the country," says Corey. "I was there near the beginning, and I was in his office doing an interview with him when he heard the news that *Lost in the Fog* had cancer."

Corey says that he would like to show the documentary at a Noe Valley venue this spring. "Maybe we can make arrangements with the Noe Valley Ministry or use the James Lick Middle School auditorium and do it as a benefit."

THAT'S THIRTY for 2006. Let's hope that peace will come in 2007. Have a hippity-hoppity holiday. ■

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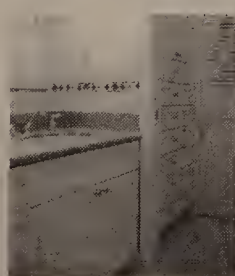
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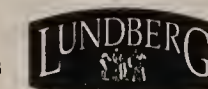


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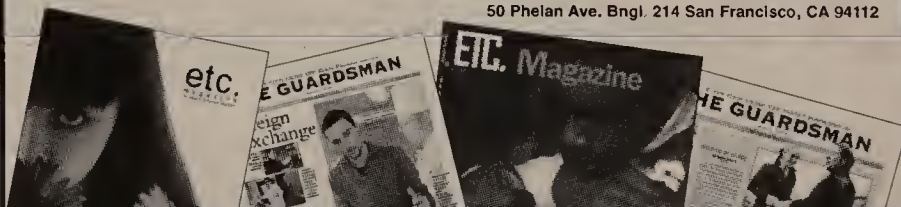
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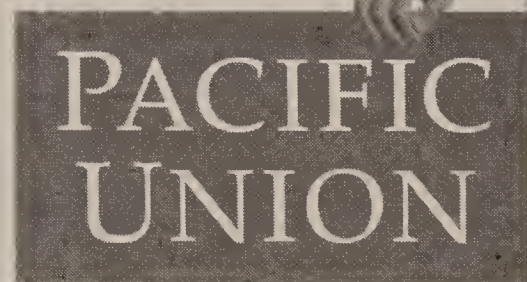
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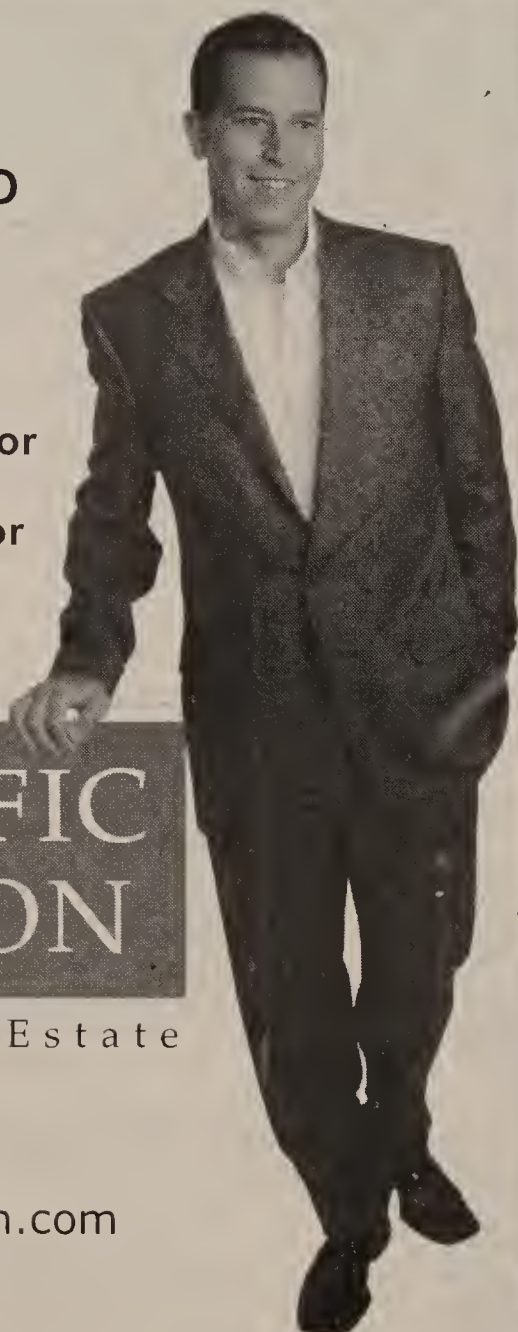


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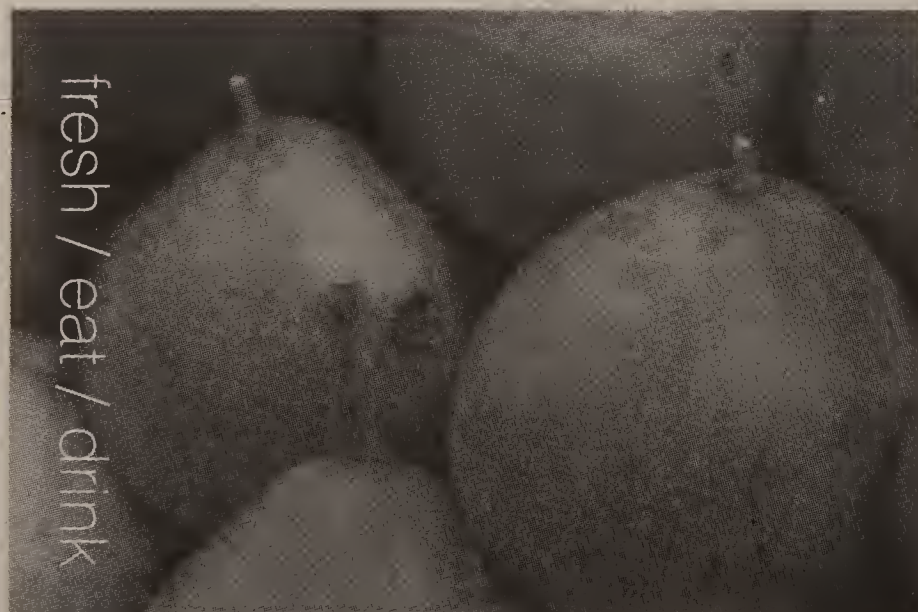
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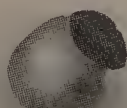
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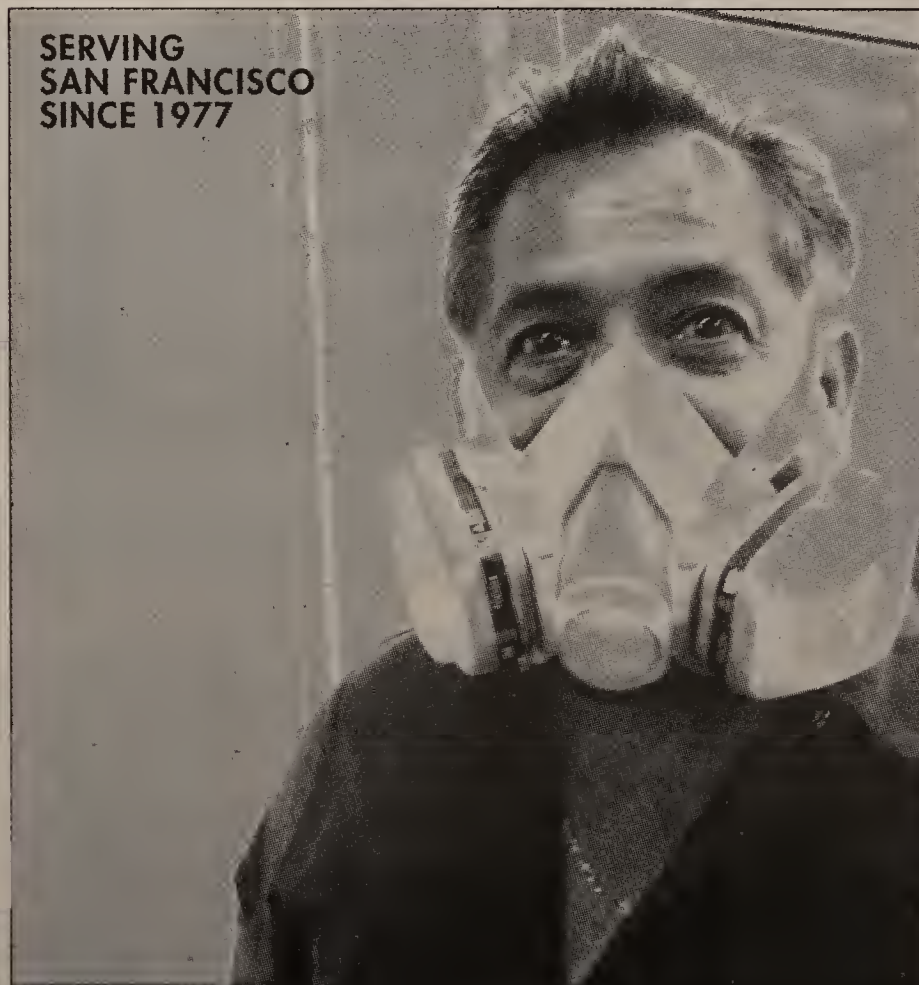
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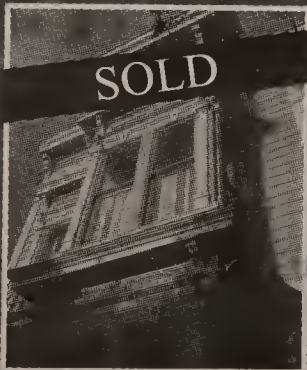
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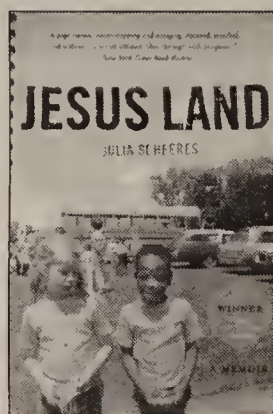
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Fair Oaks Street resident Julia Scheeres did not expect her memoir, *Jesus Land* (Counterpoint Press, 2005), to receive all the attention it has. The *New York Times Book Review* called the book “a page turner” and described it as “heart-stopping and enraging.” *Entertainment Weekly* called it a “marvelous remembrance...” *Jesus Land* will break your heart and mend it again, but it won't stop haunting you.” And *Booklist* gave it an Alex Award,

as one of the best adult books for teen readers this year.

Though pleased with the reception, Scheeres remains surprised by all the fuss. “I don't think my life is very interesting,” says the freelance journalist who has written for *Wired* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and is 39 years old, a new mother to baby Tessa born in late August, and wife to Tim Rose, a professor at Laney College in Oakland. She says she wrote the book as

a tribute to her brother David, to their relationship, and to everything they went through together.

Scheeres grew up in Indiana in a fundamentalist Christian family. When she was a teenager, she and David, the same age as she, were sent to an evangelical reform school in the Dominican Republic.

David, who is African American and adopted, had been having problems at their all-white high school in Indi-

ana. The other kids often attacked him because he was black, and Scheeres found herself separating and distancing from him, “shamefully,” she says, because, “I was tired of being called a ‘n----- lover.’ I just wanted to be normal.”

David fell into a deep depression, and his parents thought he could use a change of scenery. Scheeres got sent to the reform school not to keep David company, but because she had been caught sleeping

with her boyfriend. “In that Christian world, your virginity is your most prized possession,” she says dryly.

The book chronicles their time at the reform school, which she says was set up like a boot camp and still exists today. “We had to ask permission to sit down, to stand up, to walk from room to room. They used physical punishment and discipline,” Scheeres recounts. But the experience brought her and her brother

back together again, bonding them against a common oppressor. “The book pokes fun at these righteous folks who ran our lives,” she says, describing the memoir as full of dark humor to help balance the intensely stressful subject matter.

A member of the San Francisco Writers Grotto, Scheeres is currently working on a novel. Meanwhile, here is an excerpt from *Jesus Land*, now available in paperback at Cover and Phoenix Books.



Author Julia Scheeres
Photo by Tim Rose

A new girl arrives from eastern Kentucky. This means I'm no longer the lowest ranker in the girls' house. This means I'll no longer scrub toilets. This means I'll get a better shot at a second helping of dessert. I welcome her arrival.

Her name is Jolene, and she's 15. She's got bleached, permed hair that cascades down to her skinny butt in straw-colored coils. At night, she sits in her bunk and combs it out with a special rubber-tipped pick, one coil at a time. It is her pride and joy.

Jolene's taken hard to the loss of freedom and often plunges her face into her hands with a small moan, as if all this were a thing too ghastly to behold.

When Bruce gives her pushups, she'll chew on her bottom lip for several seconds before lowering herself to the ground, and all his tomato-faced shrieking won't speed her along. Sometimes I catch her staring at me with confused eyes, as if she were waiting for an explanation. I turn away; she'll learn soon enough that there's none to be had.

On a Sunday before vespers we learn why Jolene is here. Bruce picks me to fetch his water, and then we circle the metal chairs in the living room and sit down to confess our sins.

I now know my lines by heart, as I am called upon to repeat them whenever I'm asked what brought me to The Program.

“I was a fornicator and an alcoholic,” I say in a loud voice while gazing at my shoes, striving to appear humbled. I am a magnificent actress. I consistently get high points in the box called Being Totally Truthful and Honest, Facing Reality on my daily scorecard.

When it's Jolene's turn to confess, she looks around the circle blankly.

“Honestly, Ah don't know what Ah was sent down here for,” she says in her drawl, which is so hillbilly that Indiana rednecks seem citified in comparison.

Bruce narrows his eyes and the girls around me shift uneasily in their metal seats.

“You do too know,” he says in a tight voice. “You know perfectly well.” His voice rises several octaves, into the soprano range, when he's upset. It's a scary sound.

“Well, Ah do know that Momma married herself a borned-again man, and that's when my troubles began,” Jolene says, flipping a long corkscrew of hair over her shoulder. “Ah shoulda known they was storyin' me about this place. That rich old Briggity Birches was up to no good, no how.”

I stuff my fist in my mouth to keep from laughing, and a couple of girls cough into their hands to do the same. Becky, sitting beside Jolene, turns to her.

“Jolene, Jesus forgives His children,” she says. “Jesus loves you. Jesus will forgive you. But the first step toward receiving His love and forgiveness is to admit our mistakes.”

Jolene sucks in her cheeks as if she were preparing to spit.

“Ah don't need no forgivin, cuz Ah ain't done nothing wrong,” she says, her black eyes flashing. “And I can't say I care much for this Jesus character neither.”

Bruce bolts to his feet.

“Would you like me to tell everyone why your parents sent you here?”

“That would be my momma, cuz my daddy died when I was—”

“Jolene here had a game she played with the boys in her town, called ‘Health Clinic’—”

“Nah, we called it ‘House Call’ and...”

“This ritual of sexual abuse took place in her bedroom while her poor mother was working as a maid in a motel, toiling away in order—”

“Wasn't no motel, she worked at—”

“Quiet!” Bruce roars.

Jolene crosses her arms and hunkers down in her chair, glaring at him.

“These boys would take turns having intimate, carnal knowledge of Jolene. Right there under her poor mother's roof.”

Bruce sits down, and the room falls silent. Becky puts a hand on Jolene's shoulder, and Jolene shrugs it off with a jerk. I stare at her baggy Kentucky Wildcats T-shirt and wonder what's so special about the stick figure underneath that all these boys would crave it. She lifts her chin and looks back at me defiantly.

“Well, what do you have to say for yourself?”

Bruce asks her.

“That all happened 'fore Momma found that rich old Baptist and decided to become a fancy lady. Fore that, she didn't pay no mind at all.”

Bruce raises his index finger with an ah-ha expression on his face.

“So you confess to being a fornicator.”

“A forni-what?”

“You had sex before marriage.”

Jolene shrugs.

“Yeah, I s'pose. So?”

“Fornication is an abomination in the eyes of our Lord!”

“An abomini-what?”

“A sin! Evil! Wrong!”

“Wasn't like we was harming no one,” Jolene says with a giggle. “Actually, it was real fun.”

Bruce jumps up and orders the rest of us out of the house, so he can talk private with Jolene. We all know what this means: a session. Calisthenics,

threats, tears. Big fat O's in the Being Totally Truthful and Honest, Facing Reality box and the Courtesy and Respect Toward Authority Figures box.

Becky leads us into the darkening field beside the house, where we sit on the machete-hewn grass and sing “Humble Thyself” and “Sandy Land.”

But no matter how high we raise our voices, we can still hear Bruce bellowing inside the concrete house. We slap no-see-ums from our bare arms and shout out the lyrics and fix our eyes on the fading horizon. We sing until night wraps itself around each of us like a shroud. We sing until the raging stops.

At vespers, Jolene bends her head to pray and doesn't raise it back up again.

The chaplain, a young preacher-in-training from Kansas, asks us if Jesus will find our hearts 100 percent pure and hate-free when He returns to Earth, and I wonder how such a thing is possible.

There's a special function in the courtyard after the service. We're given grape Kool-Aid and stale chocolate-chip cookies sent by someone's parents that were tied up in Customs for two months.

No one notices that Jolene is gone until we've lined up to march back up the hill—high ranker to low—and there's an empty space behind me.

Bruce and Becky run through the courtyard wailing Jolene's name and are soon joined by other staffers, who poke flashlights into the dark classrooms and toilets calling, “Jolene! Time to go, Jolene!” as if she'd simply misplaced herself. Karen and I exchange a wide-eyed look; we know better.

Ted struts around with his hands on his hips, barking orders. The Dominican guard trots up with his machete and German shepherd, then lopes off into the darkness again, shouting in Spanish.

She's gone. Vanished into the Dominican side of the barbed wire.

Bruce and the other men pile into the school's two vans. The vehicles careen through the front gate, tires spitting gravel, and shoot down the narrow road towards Jarabacoa.

After the thrum of their engines fades into the distance, Becky turns to us, her face as pale as a mushroom.

“Let's go,” she says in a whisper.

We walk up to the girls house under the moon's unblinking gaze in a heavy silence, no one daring to give voice to the thought swirling through her head. She's free.

♦♦♦♦♦

Reprinted with author's permission from *Jesus Land: A Memoir*, by Julia Scheeres (Counterpoint Press, New York, 2005).